Ford CEO outlines plans for future of Lincolns

Jim Farley explains why automaker is moving some production to United States. **In Money**

'Lanterns' duo rings in new dynamic in DC series

Kyle Chandler and Aaron Pierre talk playing relatable space cops in HBO show. **In Life**

MATTHEW STOCKMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Pegula chases career's 1st major title

Tennis star, ranked No. 3 in the world, reveals why she loves the grind and how she visualizes winning ahead of US Open. **In Sports**

USA TODAY

THE NATION'S NEWS | $3 | WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2026

Trump dials up pressure on allies

South Korea is latest to be put on notice

Francesca Chambers
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump is putting another U.S. ally he says was insufficiently supportive of the Iran war on notice, directing the Pentagon to scale back military exercises with South Korea, a country he has pressed to pay more for its defense.

"We can't go around and protect all of these countries, especially when they're not there to help us," Trump said Aug. 17 in the Oval Office.

South Korea is the latest in a string of close U.S. allies Trump has threatened to penalize with reduced military support since the United States and Israel went to war with Iran earlier this year. The president has ripped nations such as the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain and said he's reexamining the U.S. relationship with the NATO alliance, which he has long criticized as a laggard over some members' lackluster defense spending.

As President Donald Trump scales back military exercises with South Korea, he has reached out to North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un.
KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

Over the past several days, he has lobbed similar allegations at South Korea and made public overtures to Kim Jong Un, the North Korean leader with whom he tried to negotiate a nuclear deal in his first term. A day before his missive on the joint military exercises, he posted a photo of himself and Kim, standing together inside the Demilitarized Zone, the 160-mile-long barrier that divides the two countries in half.

The actions toward South Korea, and the accompanying outreach to Kim, prompted some regional experts to ask: Why now?

Retired Rear Adm. Mark Montgomery, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, called it "befuddling and illogical for the president to be reaching out to North Korea with at least partially the intent being to punish South Korea, who is our ally and partner."

"He's not going to be able to convince Kim Jong Un to give up his nuclear weapons. There's no Nobel Prize waiting at the end of this rainbow. So I don't know what the president's up to," said Montgomery, a coauthor of the book "Axis of Aggressors: Countering the Cooperation of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea."

Sydney Seiler, a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies focused on Korea, said Trump has thought of ways to reengage

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More than a year after catastrophic LA wildfire, Pacific Palisades is eager to reopen for business

Palisades Village, the landmark shopping center that survived the Los Angeles wildfire in early 2025 but was severely damaged, celebrates its official reopening on Aug. 15. PHOTOS BY MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

Beloved town feels its heart beating again

Kathleen Wong USA TODAY

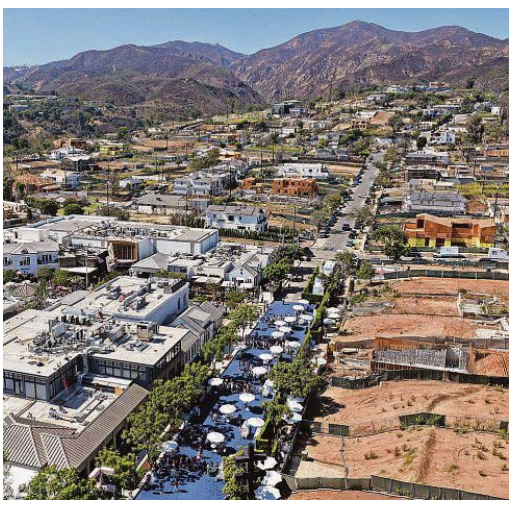
Set between the mountains and coastline of Southern California, the community of Pacific Palisades is at a turning point.

It has been just over a year and a half since powerful Santa Ana winds and a drought fueled the biggest fire in Los Angeles history. Burning for 24 days, from Jan. 7 until Jan. 31, 2025, the fire forced the evacuation of about 30,000 people, destroyed more than 23,000 acres and contributed to the deaths of 12 people. In March 2025, researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles estimated the fires' economic impact at a wage loss of $297 million for local businesses and employees.

Many Los Angeles travelers found in Palisades – a picturesque neighborhood between Malibu and Santa Monica – a respite from the hustle and bustle of the city. Travelers were drawn to the Getty Villa Museum, hiking trails and beaches, and unique boutiques and restaurants.

"The Palisades was definitely a destination for tourism," said Amy Russo, a resident of 15 years who lost her jewelry business in the fire. "People would come to drive

See PALISADES, Page 6A



Homes are still being rebuilt around the newly renovated Palisades Village at the center of the picturesque community, long a tourist destination.

GETTY IMAGES

Gen Z is willing to pay for a good night's sleep

Ken Alltucker USA TODAY

Nick Smart is always searching for ways to improve his overall wellness.

When the 29-year-old College Station, Texas, man discovered a cooling mattress topper could regulate body temperature, he thought it would be perfect for him and his wife to catch up on sleep while caring for their 11-week-old son, Emmett.

"This could really help us get better sleep, deeper sleep," Smart said.

Smart isn't alone. Generation Z – those born between 1997 and 2012 – sleeps more than any other generation, a 2024 survey showed. And some Gen Zers

See BETTER SLEEP, Page 4A

Dems demand answers on USS Lincoln

Reports of poor conditions spark furor

Erin Mansfield
USA TODAY

Sen. Jon Ossoff, D-Georgia, shown during the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence hearing in March, has assailed the president over the war in Iran and reported poor conditions aboard the USS Lincoln. JOSH MORGAN/USA TODAY NETWORK

Sen. Jon Ossoff ripped into President Donald Trump last weekend as "uniquely despicable" for "lying a nation into war" in Iran and then keeping service members aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln in the Middle East for nearly nine months amid deteriorating living conditions.

"While the sailors on the Lincoln fight his war – while he fruitlessly drains our munitions and oil reserves – the president sleeps through his meetings," Ossoff, a Georgia Democrat seeking reelection, said at a campaign event Aug 16.

"He golfs and trades stocks," Ossoff said. "See, he doesn't want to do the job. He wants to build his ballroom and travel with [executive assistant] Natalie [Harp] on their apparently defenseless flying palace gifted by the Emir of Qatar."

Stephen Cheung, the president's top spokesperson, who often doubles as his vociferous attack dog, lit up X on Aug. 17 with a derisive new nickname for Ossoff and called him the biggest "loser in politics," using a derogatory term for a man whose wife is unfaithful.

USA TODAY reported in April that sailors aboard the carrier and the USS Tripoli hadn't received care packages and weren't routinely being fed fresh food. The Pentagon denied those reports, while some Democratic lawmakers called for an investigation into the conditions.

In August, military-focused news outlets began reporting about deteriorating conditions on the Lincoln, which was stationed in the South China Sea before deploying to the Middle East. The Lincoln has been away from port since December, a lengthy deployment by Navy standards. Among the concerns are poor morale and mental health crises among service members.

All 13 Democrats on the Senate Armed Services Committee and two other high-ranking Democratic senators are now demanding answers from Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth, saying their treatment is "a symptom of poor planning by both you and the President and exacerbated by the deeply unsound decision to start a war with Iran." They're requesting answers to 11 questions about mental health resources, hygiene and safety, and asking whether the Pentagon will allow a bipartisan group of lawmakers "to visit the Lincoln to conduct firsthand oversight of conditions aboard the ship."

Trump officials, retired general call reports false

Like Cheung, Hegseth said the reports are false and defended the president. A retired Army general and commentator, Jack Keane, called the reporting about the Lincoln untrue. But Republican lawmakers largely remain silent about the conditions on the Lincoln – not harshly criticizing the administration, but not defending it either.

> **"While the sailors on the Lincoln fight his war – while he fruitlessly drains our munitions and oil reserves – the president sleeps through his meetings."**
> **Sen. Jon Ossoff, D-Georgia**

Rep. Don Bacon, a Republican from Nebraska, said on CBS' "Face The Nation" on Aug. 16 that Trump used poor phrasing in comments to journalists last week when he dismissed the plight of the sailors and said their deployment was "not long enough."

"It's better to acknowledge, 'Hey, this is hard on the families. It's hard on the service members,'" Bacon said. "Thank them for being willing to defend our country and being willing to do these 10-month deployments."

When the moderator asked Bacon whether Congress should investigate what happened on the Lincoln over the past nine months, he said "we should have oversight," and recommended bringing in the secretary of the Navy or another high-ranking official and "have them explain to us the truth on that."

Dem says conditions on carrier 'national disgrace'

Sen. Mark Kelly, a Democrat from Arizona and a retired Navy officer, called for an investigation into the conditions in a social media video, citing reports that sailors have tried to jump off the ship to end their lives. "Our service members deserve better than this," Kelly said.

Responding to Kelly's description of a sailor who had lost more than 20 pounds while on the ship, Rep. Ro Khanna, a California Democrat, wrote, This is a national disgrace."

Sen. Ruben Gallego, another Democrat from Arizona, said on ABC's "This Week" on Aug. 16 that sailors who return home are going to seriously reconsider whether they want to keep serving in the Navy because of how poorly they're being treated. He accused the Trump administration of "basically downplaying their sacrifice."

Amid a flood of reporting on conditions aboard the carrier, Hegseth said Aug. 14 that journalists "intentionally misrepresent the USS Abraham Lincoln."

Adm. Brad Cooper, commander for U.S. Central Command, issued a statement Aug. 16 saying that the USS Lincoln "has among the lowest number of cases related to mental health" among 11 active aircraft carriers.

"Find any of the nearly 4 million Navy veterans in America today, and they will likely tell you that service at sea for long periods isn't for everyone," Cooper wrote. "It is uniquely challenging and tough, and every single one of us, including me, reacts to stressors in different ways."

Gallego characterized the comments as demonstrating "a true lack of leadership" from the Trump administration and an attitude where military leaders "just look at these men and women as being expendable."

Suicides aboard Navy vessels have happened before, lawmaker says

Bacon, the Republican from Nebraska, suggested during his "Face the Nation" interview that Congress should bring in top Navy officials to testify about the situation. He agreed that long deployments are hard, pointing to his own yearlong deployment to Iraq and time he'd spent aboard an aircraft carrier.

"We had a couple of members jump overboard and commit suicide while I was on that deployment," Bacon said. "So these incidences, they're terrible, they're sad, but it has happened previously, and unfortunately likely in the future as well."

In his campaign stop, Ossoff said the service members aboard the USS Lincoln serve with excellence despite the hardships they face. "God bless" them, he said.

"They don't expect luxury," he said. "They'll endure hardship. But they deserve competent leaders who send them into combat only when necessary ... not fools who lie about the purpose and progress of war."

Justices asked to block Ten Commandments in schools

Appeal over Texas law sets up wider legal fight

Maureen Groppe
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – A coalition of multifaith families asked the Supreme Court on Aug. 17 to rule that Texas can't require public schools to display the Ten Commandments, likely setting up a major battle over the separation of church and state.

The more than two dozen families – whose beliefs include Judaism, Baha'ism, Christianity, Unitarian Universalism and no faith – are appealing a lower court decision backing Texas' law.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals voted 9-7 in April to uphold Texas Senate Bill 10, which was enacted last year and requires a poster of the Ten Commandments to be displayed in a visible spot in every public elementary and secondary school classroom in the state.

"Texas politicians shouldn't have a seat at the table in deciding how our children receive their religious education. That decision belongs to our family," two of the challengers, Rebekah and Ted Lowe, who are raising their children in the Christian and Jewish traditions, said in a statement. "This law puts one version of religious beliefs above all others in our public schools and sends a message to our children that what we teach them about religion at home is somehow wrong."

Lawyers for the families argue that the 5th Circuit – the most conservative appeals court in the country – flouted the Supreme Court's 1980 decision striking down a Kentucky law that's nearly identical to Texas' requirement. The court said Kentucky's law violated the First Amendment's ban against the government "establishing" a religion.

The appeals court, however, said that the legal reasoning behind the 1980 decision was jettisoned by the Supreme Court in its 2022 opinion backing a high school football coach who offered prayers at the 50-yard line after games despite objections from the school district that students felt compelled to take part.

The appeals court also did not agree with the families that their challenge is supported by the Supreme Court's 2025 ruling in favor of parents who wanted their elementary school children removed from Maryland schools when books with LGBTQ+ themes were being used.

Texas' requirement "bears no resemblance to the oppressive curriculum" in that situation, Circuit Judge Stuart Kyle Duncan wrote.

But lawyers for the Texas families challenging the law said they have the same First Amendment right to direct their children's religious upbringing as the parents in Maryland do.

"If the permanent, unavoidable imposition of *biblical scripture* in public-school classrooms does not interfere with, or threaten to undermine parents' ability to direct their children's religious education and to instill particular religious beliefs and practices," they wrote in their appeal, "it is difficult to imagine what would."

Unless the Supreme Court gets involved, they argued, government officials will feel free "to flood public-school classrooms with an endless array of religious rules, instructions and mandates."

The justices already have agreed to hear a case testing a different landmark decision about religious rights and the separation of church and state.

On the first day of its next term, which begins in October, the court will debate whether Catholic preschools in Colorado must admit LGBTQ+ families if they want to participate in the state's tuition-free program.

The court's decision could further limit a 1990 ruling much criticized by conservatives because it blocked religious rights challenges to laws that apply to everyone and don't target a particular religious group.

Groups including Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Freedom From Religion Foundation are representing the Texas families.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who argued the case before the appeals court, previously called that ruling a "major victory for Texas and our moral values."

"The Ten Commandments have had a profound impact on our nation," he said in April, "and it's important that students learn from them every single day."

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Federal contractors begin border barrier construction near Santa Elena Canyon, inside Big Bend National Park in Texas on Aug 6. PROVIDED BY NATALIE NEWMAN/CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Border wall work in national park is paused after outcry

Environmental groups say damage is done

Trevor Hughes
USA TODAY

Federal officials have paused a controversial construction project linked to President Donald Trump's southwest border wall through Big Bend National Park in Texas.

While federal officials did not plan to build a wall through the park, public lands advocates were outraged when contractors began bulldozing access roads through the area in early to mid-August. Videos recorded by activists captured bulldozers and track hoes cutting through the desert soil and across cliffs.

"Last night I put a pause on all activity in that park as far as construction goes until I can get down there and do a personal evaluation, talk to some stakeholders, talk to local law enforcement in that area," Customs and Border Patrol Commissioner Rodney Scott said in an Aug. 17 video statement. "More to follow this week."

Although very few illegal border-crossers currently try to cross the rugged landscape, federal officials said they needed roads to both install surveillance equipment and to permit routine patrol access in case migration patterns change. The Trump administration angered public lands groups in June by waiving environmental laws that would have otherwise slowed or prohibited that construction.

Trump campaigned on tough immigration enforcement and border controls, and he has made expansion of the border wall a key campaign promise. Environmental groups argued no wall was needed through Big Bend, a national park that was formally created in 1944 and spans about 801,000 acres of desert and mountains.

Local residents argue that the road construction itself is an environmental catastrophe. They staged an Aug. 12 protest against the project.

In a statement, the National Parks Conservation Association lauded the pause, but said damage has been done.

"Unfortunately, the federal contractors' bulldozers have already inflicted tremendous damage to one of America's most iconic national parks," NPCA President and CEO Tiernan Sittenfeld said. "Their heavy equipment has torn through miles of priceless wild landscape, wreaking havoc on sensitive wildlife and irreplaceable habitat. We demand that Customs and Border Protection take accountability for the destruction that has occurred at the park and do better by the American people and by our national parks."

Congress last summer supercharged Trump's border-security efforts with $46.5 billion in funding, and federal officials in June waived dozens of environmental regulations to speed up wall construction in or near the park.

The park's southern boundary forms about 118 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border, including along the Rio Grande. Protests against the border wall over the past several years have included some Trump voters, many local elected officials, environmental activists and migrant rights organizations.

On Aug. 13, as the bulldozers began their work, Scott in a statement to USA TODAY reiterated that workers were not building a wall. And he noted that it would be possible to both secure the border and limit work within the park.

"As we strengthen the border across the Southwest, we will not leave Big Bend as an opening for cartels to exploit by shifting their routes and tactics," he said. "We are securing this park to protect its legacy – keeping it safe, secure, and pristine so American families can enjoy the beauty of our country, free from fear of cartel activity, for generations to come."

Earlier in the year, the Trump administration indicated that it would skip building a physical barrier along about 372 miles of the border because of "unfavorable terrain or remoteness of location." Other locations will receive vehicle bollards that will let wildlife pass through unimpeded, the Department of Homeland Security said.

Speaking to reporters on Aug. 17, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said he's confident federal officials can both secure the park and the nation's southern border. Abbot said he talked to Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin and received assurances there will be no wall or fence through the park. Abbot did not address the construction of access roads.

"They understand that there are other tools to successfully secure that park through technology, through personnel, through other means," Abbot said. "There are technology tools that don't include barriers."

KY governor still seeks update on McConnell

Senior senator remains out of the public eye

Fernando Cervantes Jr.
USA TODAY

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said he has "heard absolutely nothing back from" Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, after he requested updates on the lawmaker's health amid his extended absence from Congress.

Beshear said he hoped McConnell's health would improve during an Aug. 16 interview with "Face the Nation," but he called for a response from the former Senate majority leader.

McConnell

"I wish him no harm," Beshear said. "All he needs to do is call into this show for two minutes, or Fox News for two minutes, or do a video for two minutes to the people he's supposed to serve, but you know what? He absolutely refuses to do so."

The Kentucky governor continued, speaking directly to Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, asking him to ensure all of his senators can actually serve in the chamber.

"As the leader of the Senate, you've got a duty to make sure all of your senators have the capacity to serve," Beshear said. "And what is he saying? 'Not my job.' That's not surprising."

Thune and McConnell's offices did not immediately respond to USA TODAY's request for comment.

An ongoing absence

McConnell has not appeared in the Senate since being hospitalized in June after a fall and a pneumonia diagnosis.

"All he needs to do is call into this show ... but ... he absolutely refuses to do so," says Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear. KEVIN DIETSCH/GETTY IMAGES

He last voted on June 11 and, according to GovTrack.US, he has since missed 60 roll call votes, in addition to votes on the annual defense policy bill, legislation related to Iran and confirmation proceedings for several high-profile Trump administration nominees.

Beshear has continued to pressure McConnell to provide a verbal update on his condition. In a July 27 letter to McConnell, Beshear called on the senator to "directly and verbally address the people of Kentucky and provide proof of your capacity to serve, or resign."

"It has now been 43 days since news of your hospitalization. During that time you have cast zero votes, engaged in no official activities, and aside from two photos and corresponding statements, have made no effort to communicate with your Kentucky constituents or the nation," Beshear wrote.

McConnell announced on Aug. 6 that he had been discharged from a rehabilitation center, and he plans to continue his recovery at home.

"Elaine and I are grateful for the many well wishes and support from friends, colleagues, and Kentuckians, and for the attentive care I've received from excellent doctors, nurses, therapists, and hospital staff," McConnell said in a statement issued by his Senate office.

It is unclear when McConnell will return to Washington, but he said he will "continue to engage with [his] staff and colleagues on important Senate business" while he recovers from home.

How would Kentucky fill vacant Senate seat?

Under Kentucky law, a vacancy in the U.S. Senate is filled through a special election called by the governor. The winner would serve the remainder of the senator's term, while the seat would remain vacant until election results are certified.

The timing of that election has become a central point of debate. Kentucky's law requires the governor to issue a proclamation calling the election; however, legal experts told CNBC the statute does not set a firm deadline for when that proclamation must be issued. Once it is, counties and candidates must meet a series of filing deadlines before voters can head to the polls.

McConnell has not indicated he will leave his seat. And Beshear has suggested the state's 2024 special-election-only law could conflict with the Kentucky Constitution. He has pointed to Section 152, which says statewide vacancies are filled by gubernatorial appointment, raising questions about whether a Senate vacancy could ultimately trigger a legal challenge.

Contributing: Melina Khan

Mangione murder trial is postponed

Judge rules after guilty plea in New York case

Thao Nguyen
USA TODAY

Luigi Mangione's New York state murder trial in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson in 2024 has been postponed after he pleaded guilty last week to federal charges and moved to have the state case dismissed, court records show.

Judge Gregory Carro issued a brief order Aug. 17 giving Manhattan prosecutors until Oct. 9 to respond to a defense motion arguing that New York's double jeopardy law bars the state prosecution. Carro also scheduled Mangione's next court appearance for Dec. 10, postponing the trial that had been scheduled to begin Sept. 8.

Mangione's legal team filed the motion shortly after he admitted in federal court Aug. 14 that he shot Thompson outside a New York City hotel in December 2024. Mangione, 28, pleaded guilty to two federal charges of stalking resulting in death, which carry a maximum sentence of life in prison.

His attorneys argued that the state's double jeopardy law protects him from being prosecuted and punished twice for the same conduct. State prosecutors have objected to the defense's claim.

The killing of Thompson, 50, drew national attention and was widely condemned by public officials. At the same time, the case became a flashpoint in wider public debate over frustrations with the U.S. health insurance industry.

'I shot Mr. Thompson in Manhattan'

Mangione entered his federal plea without a deal with federal prosecutors, and there is no guarantee that taking responsibility will result in any leniency at his sentencing. Jamie McDonald, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, said his office would seek the maximum sentence of life in prison.

At his plea hearing Aug. 14, Mangione admitted ambushing Thompson outside a Manhattan hotel in December 2024 after planning the attack. He also told the court he 3D-printed a handgun and traveled to New York with the intention of shooting Thompson.

"I shot Mr. Thompson in Manhattan," Mangione told the judge.

Federal prosecutors initially charged Mangione with murder through the use of a firearm and sought the death penalty. But earlier this year, a U.S. district judge dismissed the two most serious federal charges, removing the possibility of capital punishment.

Timeline of Luigi Mangione case

Thompson was shot in early on Dec. 4, 2024, outside a hotel where he was set to speak at an investment conference, authorities said. The shooting prompted a massive law enforcement response and investigation.

Surveillance footage and forensic evidence linked the suspect to the scene, including DNA and ballistics found by investigators. Mangione was arrested five days later, on Dec. 9, 2024, in Altoona, Pennsylvania, after an employee and customers at a McDonald's restaurant recognized Mangione from images released by the New York Police Department, authorities said.

Police officials said they matched the gun found in Mangione's possession to casings discovered outside the hotel where Thompson was shot. Investigators also matched Mangione's fingerprints to those found on a water bottle and a protein bar wrapper near the scene of the killing, authorities said.

In December 2024, Mangione pleaded not guilty to state murder, weapons and forgery charges brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg. He also faces charges in Pennsylvania.

If convicted in New York state court, Mangione faces a sentence of 25 years to life on the murder charge.

Contributing: Christopher Cann, N'dea Yancey-Bragg and Amethyst Martinez, USA TODAY Network; Reuters

Penn State students face drug ring charges

Suspected operation centered on fraternities

Thao Nguyen
USA TODAY

More than a dozen current and former Pennsylvania State University students have been charged in connection with a suspected drug trafficking ring that authorities say operated in and around two fraternities, prosecutors announced.

The operation involved members of the Delta Upsilon and Sigma Chi fraternities, according to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office. Prosecutors said large quantities of cocaine were transported from Philadelphia and New York to State College, Pennsylvania, from 2023 to 2024.

The drugs were mainly cut and packaged at the two fraternity houses before being distributed to Penn State students, prosecutors said Aug. 17. An investigation identified Agostino Abbatiello and Thomas Robinson as the operation's primary suppliers, whom Pennsylvania Attorney General Dave Sunday described as "the top of the chain" and senior members of the two fraternities.

Abbatiello and Robinson were among 14 people charged in the operation, prosecutors said. The only person not a current or former Penn State student was Paul Robinson, Thomas Robinson's father.

"We did not hear of any drug packaging happening on Penn State's campus," Sunday said at a news conference. "Again, the packaging happened at off-campus fraternity houses, and the actual drug dealing was largely from friend to friend, fraternity brother to fraternity brother, acquaintance to acquaintance, and at fraternity houses and/or during parties or social engagements."

Prosecutors: Operation centered on fraternity members, pledges

Thirteen of the people charged were Penn State students at or around the time of the conduct, and at least four of those are current students, prosecutors said.

Abbatiello, Thomas Robinson, Mohammed Hurabi and Lars Zeepvat were charged with felony corrupt organizations, conspiracy, dealing in proceeds of unlawful activity and other related offenses, prosecutors said. Another student, Robert Zanolla, faces felony conspiracy and criminal use of a communication facility charges, and eight others were charged with misdemeanor drug possession and paraphernalia offenses.

Prosecutors accused Abbatiello and Thomas Robinson of making regular trips to Philadelphia and New York to obtain large amounts of cocaine.

"This was a coordinated and highly profitable drug trafficking crew revolving around two senior members of the fraternities, other fraternity brothers, and pledges," Sunday said. "In fact, according to the evidence uncovered, cutting and packaging cocaine was, for some pledges, an indoctrination into the fraternities."

Prosecutors said investigators used various techniques to track the operation, including monitoring how the cocaine was obtained, processed and sold. Many transactions were conducted in cash or through payment applications, prosecutors said.

Paul Robinson was charged with felony tampering and hindering apprehension. Prosecutors said he took steps to conceal evidence, including a safe containing drugs and cash, and obstructed the investigation.

Penn State University 'horrified' by drug trafficking allegations

In a statement released Aug. 17, Penn State said it was "horrified" by the allegations. The university said it was cooperating with law enforcement, and it condemned any criminal activity or hazing tied to the allegations.

The school announced it was placing Delta Upsilon on interim suspension while its Office of Student Accountability and Conflict Response investigates the allegations. Current students charged in the case will be subject to the student conduct process, and Delta Upsilon will face review under the school's organizational conduct procedures, the university said.

Better sleep

Continued from Page 1A

and millennials are shelling out big bucks on sleep aids and supplements to meet their personal health goals, according to new data from Truemed, an online marketplace that lets consumers use health savings (HSA) and flexible spending account (FSA) funds on eligible items.

Truemed's analysis of more than 1 million HSA and FSA orders from January 2025 through May 2026 showed Gen Z spent more on sleep-related products than all other categories, except supplements.

Smart has previously used his HSA to buy wellness-related items, including a red light therapy device to recover from a torn pectoral muscle. He credited the device for accelerating his recovery.

When Smart and his wife struggled to get adequate sleep after the birth of their son earlier this year, he searched for sleep-related products and discovered a cooling mattress topper that cost about $2,400. The mattress topper measures a user's breathing and heart rate and adjusts the temperature throughout the night.

He said the topper has helped his wife to stay cool during occasional postpartum hot flashes.

He might not have bought the topper if he had to spend money budgeted for daily living expenses. But because he accumulated enough in his HSA through corporate jobs at Chevron and an artificial intelligence oil and gas startup, he figured why not use those dollars on a product that qualified as an eligible HSA expense.

"There's a whole movement in how can I get the best sleep possible," said Smart, referring to a viral trend called SleepMaxxing on social media. "I want to wake up and feel refreshed, not feel like garbage trying to play catch up all day long."

Can you use your HSA?

Because these young adults are often grappling with cost-of-living pressures, many are turning to HSAs as a way to pay for care or purchase products to bolster their overall health.

HSAs are commonly used among workers who get health insurance through an employer. As of mid-2025, a national survey showed U.S. consumers had 40 million HSAs with $159 billion in deposits, a 16% surge in savings from a year before.

The accounts are especially popular among younger generations who entered the workforce as high-deductible insurance plans became common. About 55% of Gen Z adults and Millennials have health savings accounts, according to HealthEquity's health care affordability pulse report.

HSAs can save consumers on taxes in three ways. Consumers can accumulate HSA balances through payroll deductions and employer contributions before income taxes. Consumers can invest HSA funds to accumulate tax-free gains. When consumers withdraw funds from an HSA, the proceeds are tax-free if used for qualified expenses.

The IRS details what counts as qualified expenses. Consumers can generally use HSA balances for medical care such as doctor and hospital visits, prescription medications, dental and vision care, menstrual products, mental health services and medical equipment and supplies, according to Fran Scott, HealthEquity's director of compliance.

If consumers want to use HSA balances on exercise equipment, nutrition, or items such as sleep aids, they might need a letter of medical necessity from a doctor before making a purchase. Nutritional supplements might not be an eligible HSA expense unless they are recommended by a medical practitioner as treatment for a diagnosed medical condition, according to Scott.

Before making a purchase, HealthEquity recommends consumers confirm a service or product is HSA-eligible as detailed by the IRS or via a letter of medical necessity from a doctor.

What do the experts think?

While some products like a quality mattress can help someone get a better night's rest, sleep medicine experts caution against expecting immediate results from supplements or following trends pitched on social media.

"You have influencers and others who are trying to provide medical information for clicks versus what's been established and what's been studied," said Dr. David Kuhlmann, a sleep expert and spokesman for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, or AASM.

One popular SleepMaxxing trend Kuhlmann doesn't endorse – taping or placing an adhesive over your mouth to force breathing through your nose. While some smaller studies have explored mouth taping, there's little evidence to suggest it should be standard practice to improve sleep.

Still, many Americans are looking for ways to get a restful night's sleep. A recent AASM survey found 45% of adults said family responsibilities have a major or moderate impact on their ability to regularly sleep well. The survey said 39% cited job stress, 36% said housing costs, and 35% said work schedules impaired the ability to regularly sleep well.

One in 3 adults get excessive daytime sleepiness, which has been linked to cognitive impairment, work-related accidents, drowsy driving and mental health concerns such as depression, according to the AASM.

AASM recommends the following steps for restful sleep:

- Go to bed when you're sleepy, and wake up at the same time each day.
- Take 30 to 60 minutes before bed to decompress. Avoid screen time, work email and stressful conversations.
- Exercise regularly or stay active to help ease stress, but avoid vigorous workouts right before bed.
- Eat a balanced diet with fruits and vegetables, grains and protein.

Allies

Continued from Page 1A

Kim for some time and appeared to be signaling his desire to jump-start denuclearization talks with the hermit nation in his social media posts.

As part of the 2018 negotiations, Seiler said, Kim demanded the United States roll back the joint exercises. In return, North Korea was expected to refrain from nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic missile launches.

"Some messages have been sent in. Pyongyang has not replied. But Trump's had a lot of other things on his plate. He's not necessarily interested in aggressively chasing after Pyongyang when there's no evidence that they'll be receptive," said Seiler, the intelligence officer for North Korea at the National Intelligence Council during the Biden administration.

Trump said Aug. 17 that Kim had responded. He did not say when or how the communications occurred, and the White House did not offer details.

The president repeatedly expressed a desire last year to meet with Kim while he was in South Korea for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit or during a visit to China, where he was a guest of President Xi Jinping this spring.

South Korean then-Prime Minister Kim Min-seok told Trump during the APEC CEO Summit last October, "I believe that we've been planting good seeds for a better future."

The two countries are technically still at war over the Korean Peninsula, with neither side declaring defeat since a 1953 armistice. South Korea's constitution claims the entire peninsula as its own, and North Korea's newly amended constitution categorizes South Korea as a "hostile state."

Over the weekend, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung called for talks to end the war. Not long after, Trump posted a photo of himself with Kim and said: "Despite the unfriendly look on this particular picture, there are many where we're smiling, Kim Jong Un and I get along GREAT!"

Then, on Aug. 16, Trump said the United States was dialing down military exercises with South Korea, which he said was too late to cancel.

"These exercises are not only costly, with much of these costs paid for by the United States of America (as usual!)," he wrote on Truth Social, adding "but send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile, to a Country that, as long as Donald J. Trump has been President, has been unthreatening and respectful."

Trump has always felt that the relationship he built with Kim in his first term, and the United States' alliances in the region, would make it uniquely possible for him to lead some sort of groundbreaking negotiation, said Alexander Gray, chief of staff at the National Security Council in Trump's first term.

U.S. Army soldiers take part in a U.S.-South Korea river-crossing exercise on March 14, part of the annual Freedom Shield military training near the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea. SOO-HYEON KIM/REUTERS

"The president has never changed or deviated from his desire to broker a historic deal that could potentially bring peace to the Korean Peninsula," Gray said. "The question is, when would he have the bandwidth, the opportunity – when would the stars align for him to pursue that?"

In a statement to USA TODAY, the South Korean Embassy in Washington said it was coordinating closely with the United States on the exercises.

It further expressed a desire that "the friendly relationship between the leaders of the United States and North Korea will lead to meaningful dialogue between them, paving the way for discussions aimed at advancing peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula."

Trump believes resolving the isolation of North Korea, and addressing North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons, would be a feather in his cap, Montgomery said.

"We have failed in negotiating in Ukraine. We failed in negotiating with Iran. I think we're going to find the Gaza deal falls apart," he said. "The last thing we need is to begin serious negotiations, bilateral U.S.-North Korean serious negotiations, that put the security of Japan and South Korea at risk."

Asked about Kim in the Oval Office on Aug. 17, Trump brought up the amount of money the United States spends on protecting South Korea and his earlier allegation that South Korea refused to help him with Iran.

"I called him, I said: 'Would you like to give us a little hand? We don't need help with Iran, but if you'd like, give us a hand with Iran.' He said, 'No thanks,' " Trump said, referring to the South Korean president.

Trump said he told Lee: "We have 39,000 soldiers over there, guarding you, from Kim Jong Un, your next-door neighbor, and you're not going to help us on a very easy military operation in Iran? That's strange."

According to a Center for International Policy study released in July, the U.S. government spends $5.5 billion to $6 billion a year on bases and forces in South Korea.

Gray, the former chief of staff on the National Security Council, said that whether it's in Europe, Asia or the Middle East, the framework is changing for what American allies should expect to put into the partnership so they can receive U.S. military support and favorable trade terms. "If you're going to get all those things, there needs to be an expectation that when the United States undertakes a major military campaign or undertakes a major initiative globally, that the allies who are supposedly closest to us and benefit the most from the security umbrella step up and contribute, even in small ways," he said.

In its statement, the South Korean government said it had actively participated in discussions aimed at securing a ceasefire in Iran and reopening the Strait of Hormuz and was closely consulting with the United States on ways to contribute militarily.

As of 2024, South Korea spent roughly $47.6 billion, or 2.6%, of its gross domestic product on defense. It has committed to boosting that amount to 3.5%. Last year, South Korea also committed to spending $25 billion on U.S. military equipment by 2030 and pledged to spend $33 billion to support American forces stationed on the peninsula.

Trump votes by mail in FL primary

Joey Garrison
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump voted by mail in Florida's Republican primary, according to the White House, even as he rails against mail-in voting as an "inherently corrupt" method that is akin to cheating.

Trump returned his mail ballot on Aug. 13 for the Aug. 18 Florida Republican primary, which features the GOP gubernatorial primary that includes Trump-backed candidate Rep. Byron Donalds.

Politico first reported on Trump casting a mail-in ballot in Florida, the president's home state, by citing voting records from the Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections. USA TODAY was unable to access the president's Palm Beach County records online. A search tool said Trump's voting records were "protected from public disclosure."

Trump has voted by mail in the past, including in March for a Florida state House special election. This time comes as Trump is urging the Senate to pass the SAVE America Act, which would limit mail ballots to voters either in the military, disabled, traveling or with illnesses preventing them from voting in person.

Olivia Wales, a White House spokeswoman, confirmed Trump voted by mail in the Florida GOP primary, calling it "a nonstory."

"As President Trump has said, the SAVE America Act has commonsense exceptions for Americans to use mail-in ballots for illness, disability, military, or travel – but universal mail-in voting should not be allowed because it's highly susceptible to fraud," Wales said. "As everyone knows, the President is a resident of Palm Beach and participates in Florida elections, but he obviously primarily lives at the White House in Washington, DC."

Trump last week asked the Supreme Court to intervene to fully implement an executive order that seeks to restrict the use of mail-in ballots before the November midterm elections that will decide control of Congress. Trump's order, which was blocked by a judge in Massachusetts, called on states to provide lists of eligible voters who may receive mail ballots. If states did not comply, USPS would refuse to deliver the ballots under the order.

"Mail-in voting means mail-in cheating. I call it mail-in cheating, and we got to do something about it all," Trump said in remarks in Memphis, Tennessee, in March.

Trump leveled similar baseless claims about mail voting ahead of the 2020 election he lost to Joe Biden and the 2024 election he won over Kamala Harris.

Contributing: Reuters

13-year-old called 911 after shooting rampage in Michigan

Family calls wounded lone survivor a hero

Thao Nguyen, Keith Matheny and John Wisely
USA TODAY NETWORK

The home of suspected mass shooter Chad Hickman on South LaChance Road on Aug. 16 in Missaukee County, Michigan. ADAM VANDER KOOY/USA TODAY NETWORK

A 13-year-old girl, the lone survivor of a shooting spree in rural northern Michigan, called 911 after being shot multiple times and alerted authorities, according to her family and state police.

The girl was discovered at a home in Lake Township in Missaukee County, where three other people were also found dead when troopers arrived on the morning of Aug. 14, Michigan State Police said in a news release. Authorities launched a manhunt for the suspected gunman, who was identified as Chad Hickman, 39, after he fled the scene before troopers arrived.

Investigators believe Hickman killed five people in three locations, according to state police. He was later found dead alongside one of the victims near Whitlock Lake.

The girl was taken to a hospital in critical condition but was listed in stable condition on Aug. 15, state police said. Authorities have not released the names of the victims or said how they were connected to the suspect, but a relative identified his daughter and two grandchildren among the victims.

"The world just lost two beautiful people and one is clinging to life," David Everitt wrote on Facebook. "My daughter Amanda and her two beautiful children were shot in their home yesterday."

Everitt later wrote that his granddaughter, despite being shot four times, "still managed to call 911 and identify the shooter." He added: "She is a hero."

State police spokesperson Lt. Ashley Miller told NBC News that the girl "called 911 to report that she had been shot." The suspect fled before authorities arrived at the scene, but investigators were aware of the suspected shooter's identity, Miller said.

USA TODAY reached out to Michigan State Police for comment.

What happened in the shooting?

Investigators spent Aug. 14 and Aug. 15 processing three crime scenes and piecing together a preliminary timeline, according to state police.

At about 11:40 a.m. on Aug. 14, troopers responded to a home in Lake Township after receiving a report that a 13-year-old girl had been shot, state police said. She was taken to a local hospital in critical condition and later was listed in stable condition.

Inside the home, investigators found three people dead: a 45-year-old man; a 40-year-old woman; and a 16-year-old boy, according to state police.

Authorities launched a search for Hickman, which led investigators to a second home in Missaukee County, where a 53-year-old man was found dead.

Authorities later located Hickman's vehicle in a wooded area near Whitlock Lake in Caldwell Township. There, state police said investigators found Hickman and a 29-year-old woman dead. Evidence at the scene indicated Hickman died by suicide.

Megan Brown, chief communications officer for Munson Healthcare, confirmed on Aug. 16 that Munson Healthcare Cadillac Hospital treated a victim of what she described as a "tragic local incident." After being stabilized, the victim was transferred to another facility outside the Munson system.

Small Michigan community rattled

The killings have reverberated through Missaukee County and nearby communities, where many people knew at least one of the victims.

"This is what everybody is talking about," said Mike Davidson, who lives less than 2 miles from the home where three of the killings occurred. "It seems like everybody knew at least one person involved in it. It's really had an impact. It's led to a lot of scared people."

Records detail suspect's history

Court records show Hickman was convicted of child abuse and was involved in a contentious divorce that included allegations of domestic abuse.

Hickman was charged in January 2024 in Missaukee County with four felonies and five misdemeanors, including assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder by strangulation, two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and interfering with electronic communications, according to court records.

The misdemeanor charges included domestic violence, three counts of fourth-degree child abuse and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

In August 2024, Hickman pleaded guilty to one count of fourth-degree child abuse and one count of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Prosecutors dismissed the remaining charges as part of the plea agreement, court records show.

He was sentenced to one year in the county jail.

Thao Nguyen reports for USA TODAY. Keith Matheny and John Wisely report for the Detroit Free Press

Maryland officials report third beaver attack in three weeks

Michelle Del Rey
USA TODAY

A series of beaver attacks has occurred in Maryland over the summer. The latest is the third such attack of the season.

A news release from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources states that Seneca Creek State Park staff received a report of a beaver that attacked and bit a 10-year-old girl who was swimming and wading in a creek on park property on Aug. 13.

The attack occurred around 3:30 p.m. ET while the child was attending summer camp close to the Potomac River. After the beaver bit the child, counselors intervened and the animal escaped into the water.

Family members transported the child to Suburban Hospital in Bethesda due to laceration wounds on her upper leg, the news release states.

Agency staff are searching for the animal and have closed the area where the attack occurred until further notice.

A canoeing group in the same park also reported a beaver attempted to charge one of their boats.

No injuries were reported in connection with that incident.

USA TODAY has contacted the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for additional information.

Previous beaver attacks in Maryland this summer

On Aug. 5, a 19-year-old fisherman was attacked by a beaver at Cunningham Falls State Park, more than 36 miles from the Aug. 13 attack, according to an earlier news release.

The 19-year-old sustained a bite to the ankle and transported himself to Meritus Medical Center in Hagerstown, Maryland, for treatment. At the hospital, the man received treatment for rabies exposure and a tetanus shot. The beaver was caught, euthanized and tested positive for rabies.

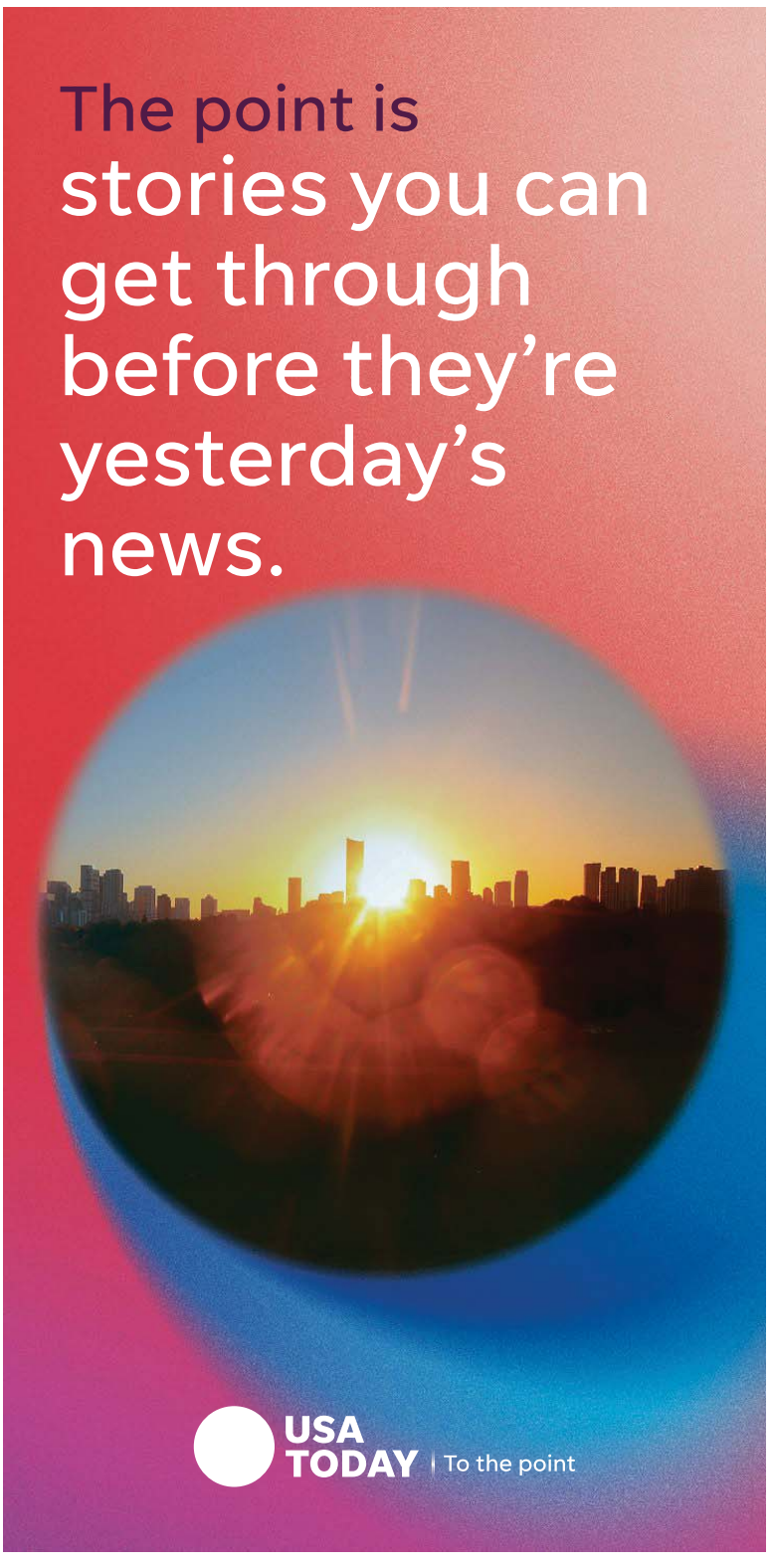
On July 26, a beaver attacked a 13-year-old swimmer. In that incident, the beaver was also caught, euthanized and tested positive for rabies on July 27.

Last week's incident is not related to the earlier attacks, authorities said, due to the distance between the two parks, the beavers' home ranges and their social behaviors.

Data from state health departments show there's no indication of a rabies outbreak in Frederick or Montgomery counties, where the reported beaver attacks occurred.

After the July 26 incident, officials dismantled a beaver lodge and established daily surveillance at the lake.

Before this year's incidents, the last recorded beaver attacks in Maryland were in 2021 and 2015.



AOC has no regrets going public with egg-freezing plans

She wants family planning to be a focus

Fernando Cervantes Jr.
USA TODAY

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez says she has no regrets about publicly sharing her decision to freeze her eggs.

The congresswoman from New York posted her comments on Instagram Aug. 15 days after reports surfaced that Ocasio-Cortez and her longtime partner, Riley Roberts, had ended their engagement.

"One question that I received earlier is: 'Do I regret coming out publicly about this due to all of the political negativity and the larger political context, and especially this idea that for me, I'm quite young in my career, especially when it comes to politics, and so, would the backlash around this have any future impact on my career, and do I regret it for those reasons?' " she said.

Ocasio-Cortez

"And the answer to that simply is, no. I was born a woman, period, and I have no control over that, and I wouldn't want to change that."

AOC recently opened up about family planning

Ocasio-Cortez's comments came after she publicly revealed she had frozen her eggs.

The 36-year-old Democrat said she wanted to help normalize conversations about family planning and reproductive health, particularly for working women who are balancing career and personal goals. Later on ABC's "This Week," she said concerns about access to reproductive care under the Trump administration factored into her decision.

"In this political environment where this administration is denying reproductive care to women across the country, from abortion rights to the ability to carry out a healthy pregnancy, I think it's important for us as leaders to have these conversations and share these processes, especially for working women across the country and normalize them."

'More time to make some of these decisions'

Danielle Melfi, CEO of Resolve, a fertility patient advocacy group, told USA TODAY more women are choosing to freeze their eggs than ever before.

"While egg freezing isn't a guarantee, it does help women feel like they have more time to make some of these decisions," Melfi said.

Though egg freezing is on the rise, some drawbacks include varying pregnancy success rates, financial barriers and minor procedural risks, according to UCLA Health.

Despite those challenges, more women are considering egg freezing because of technological advances, expanded insurance and employer coverage, and a trend toward starting families later, said Ilana Ressler, a reproductive endocrinologist at Illume Fertility.

"Egg quantity and quality decline with age no matter how healthy or fit someone is," Ressler said. "More women understand that now, and a growing number of them want to do something about it while they still have the option."

Contributing: Madeline Mitchell, Sara Moniuszko and James Powel

Palisades

Continued from Page 1A

through it and be like, this town is so cute and different, even though they weren't staying there. ... It wasn't really like, 'Oh, I'm going to the Palisades.' They would find it as a destination to come to dinner, to walk around, to spend the day."

There's still evidence of the fires throughout Palisades, of burned-down structures and empty dirt lots. But its residents have been finding their own ways to heal and define recovery. Now 20 months later, the time has come to reopen doors and start writing a new chapter.

On Aug. 15, the town celebrated a milestone for recovery: the reopening of Palisades Village, the shopping center in the heart of town. Since 2018, the Village has been home to farmers markets and restaurants, serving as a space for community members.

"We believe Palisades Village reopening can serve as a catalyst for the broader recovery of the city – a signal to other businesses, retailers, and families that this community is coming back," Palisades Village CEO Corinne Verdery said in a statement.

Empty lots and new homes under construction dot the landscape in Pacific Palisades, California, in January after a wildfire a year before killed more than 30 people in the area and destroyed thousands of homes. JOSH EDELSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

It has been a difficult journey for members of the Palisades community, but their deep love for their home has them committed to forging ahead. Travelers play a crucial role in the town's recovery when they support the small businesses that give the Palisades its distinctive charm.

"While important work remains, the Palisades has made significant progress in the months since the fires, thanks to the efforts of residents, small businesses, and local leaders working tirelessly to move the community forward," Adam Burke, president and CEO of LA Tourism, said in a statement. "Visitors continue to play an important role in that recovery by supporting local businesses, helping sustain jobs, and contributing to economic activity across Los Angeles."

Community comes together

The fires are still surreal to Michelle Murphy, who was born in the San Fernando Valley but moved to the Palisades 15 years ago. Murphy and her family lost their home and all their belongings to the flames. Starting over felt overwhelming.

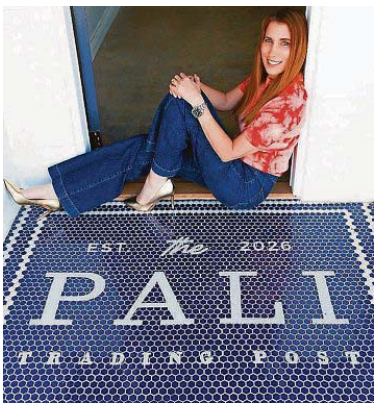
"Unless you've lived it, you cannot even imagine what it does to yourself to lose," she said. "It's not the possessions. ... It's like years of building a life and knowing that this is where my kids go to school, and this is where I go to get my groceries, and just the basics of your life that you've created without even consciously creating these habits and patterns, of all of a sudden, like, boom, that doesn't exist anymore." She remembers going to the store and not knowing where to even begin buying the basic necessities for her family.

In the immediate aftermath of the fires, Murphy said the community came together to donate supplies to people in need. Her family called their hallway closet "CVS" for the rows of basics like dental floss.

To this day, she'll be reminded of her loss when she looks for something and realizes it's not there because of the fires.

After months of bouncing around in rentals, the family purchased a house in Cheviot Hills, about 25 minutes from Palisades, and renovated it to look nearly identical to the home that burned down. But it's still not home, and they're putting it up for sale – even planning to take a loss – so they can return to Palisades.

Murphy isn't the only one who feels this way. In a January 2026 report by the nonprofit Department of Angels, 88% of Palisades fire victims said they wanted to rebuild their home. But insurance claims have been sluggish, with nearly 8 in 10 of insurance policyholders having "serious challenges" with their insurers.



Michelle Murphy's love for Palisades led her to take a leap by opening her first retail store, Pali Trading Post. PROVIDED BY MICHELLE MURPHY

Amy Russo, left, and Michelle Good lost their jewelry store, Obsessed, in the flames. Now, Russo says, it's time for a "rebirth." PROVIDED BY AMY RUSSO

Progress for many residents has been slow. More than 635 Palisades homes were destroyed in the fires, and as of Aug. 12, there are 123 building permits issued and only one home fully rebuilt, according to the Los Angeles County Recovery Dashboard.

The devastation scared off tourists, despite many other parts of Los Angeles' West Side remaining open**.** On the border between Palisades and Santa Monica since 1989 is the Channel Road Inn. On the morning of Jan. 7, 2025, all guests and staff were evacuated as the flames approached the hotel property's northern side. Firefighters stopped the fire from damaging the hotel, but it remained closed for 65 days because of evacuation orders, street closures and water concerns.

As residents dealt with displacement and their own trauma, the inn was quiet. "Being closed for more than nine weeks hit our bottom line hard, but the bigger battle came in the months that followed," said Tamara Mims, CEO and president of Four Sisters Inns, parent company to the Channel Road Inn. "Once reopened, we still faced an uphill climb, because so many travelers were actively avoiding the entire area, whether or not their destinations had actually been touched by the fire."

It wasn't until February – 13 months after the fire – that occupancy numbers hit normal levels. "That gap between perception and reality has been the hardest thing to overcome, because it directly affects the small businesses, restaurants and inns like ours that depend on visitors coming back," Mims said.

A resolve born of the fire

Murphy's move back to Palisades isn't the only risk she's taking for the town that holds her heart. Her career background is in advertising – owning her own agency – but she just took the leap to open her first retail store in July 2026. "I have no experience whatsoever," she said. "This is completely created and born from the fire, like 100%."

The idea came to Murphy last December when she began to worry about the fate of Palisades: that it would be rebuilt by big corporations and lose its beloved small-town character unless residents themselves stepped up.

Rooted in love and pride for Palisades, Murphy's gift shop, Pali Trading Post, is stocked with brands that supported fire victims or items made by community members, like hanging artwork made by a Palisades artist who lost her studio in the fires.

Her venture has also given her a new sense of purpose. "It's the best therapy," she said. "Like there is no medical therapy that could do for me, like heal me the way having this store has healed me."

The new retailers devoted to reviving Palisades and the reopened Palisades Village mark new spaces for tourists and residents alike to gather – helping inject life back into the town.

Russo sees this time as a "rebirth." Her and business partner Michelle Good's jewelry store, Obsessed, was burned in the fire, and insurance didn't cover the loss of the jewelry inventory. They took their business online for a while but missed a brick-and-mortar space where they could connect with customers face-to-face. They're opening a new retail store called Palisades General Store on Sept. 19. It will still have Obsessed jewelry but also will evolve to sell other types of goods.

"I look at things in a different way, like [the fires] brought us so much closer to our community," Russo said. Although she acknowledges many people are still working through the trauma and overcoming insurance challenges to rebuild, she's focusing on the positive. "I keep reminding them, I'm like, but you're here, and we're moving on, and it's going to be better than ever."

Tips to visit Palisades responsibly

- **Every dollar counts.** Spending at local businesses directly supports the owners and employees of Palisades. It can be as simple as grabbing lunch after a hike, or picking up a souvenir on your way home. "Every meal, every purchase, every visit supports businesses who have spent months fighting to come back," Mims said. "Their support strengthens local businesses and contributes to the vitality of the entire community."
- **Spread the word.** Palisades businesses need as much help as possible right now to stay afloat, and support doesn't have to be through a transaction. "If you're not in a position to buy or eat, word of mouth – tell a friend about a cute shop that you saw somewhere, or post about it on your social media and just give a little bit of exposure," Murphy said. "Any little bit helps. At the end of the day, that's what keeps all the doors open."
- **Focus on the positive.** As you drive around Palisades and see the remnants of the devastation, it's a reminder that recovery is not over and sensitivity to what happened will go a long way. Many people are still working through their trauma and struggling with insurance payouts. "There are people that I've met that have to come back to their homes, and they're not ready to come back," said Russo. Don't gawk at the loss, and focus on supporting those trying to rebuild their community.

OPINION

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I had postpartum psychosis. It's now on trial.

Dr. Barbara Decker
Opinion contributor

Lindsay Clancy at her trial in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on Aug. 17. A jury will decide whether postpartum psychosis overtook Clancy when her three children were killed in 2023. GREG DERR/THE PATRIOT LEDGER/USA TODAY NETWORK VIA REUTERS CONNECT

My story was silent until a scream in the middle of the night.

Two months after I delivered my daughter, I stopped trusting the world around me – and then my own mind. I was afraid to say it out loud. I am a neurologist, but illness does not spare those who study it.

Today, I feel like I'm still screaming, not for myself this time, but for other mothers.

In a Massachusetts courtroom, a jury must decide whether postpartum psychosis overtook Lindsay Clancy's mind when her three children were killed in 2023. But the deeper question extends far beyond this verdict.

Clancy's defense rests on postpartum psychosis, yet the diagnostic manual that American psychiatry relies upon does not recognize it as its own diagnosis. Instead, postpartum psychosis remains folded into broader mood disorders despite growing evidence that it is biologically distinct.

System failed Clancy long before trial on the deaths of her children

She sought care repeatedly. She saw multiple clinicians. She was prescribed more than a dozen medications.

That failure is not because postpartum psychosis is controversial. It is because our diagnostic framework has not kept pace with the science.

Many of the world's leading experts recently argued in the scientific journal Biological Psychiatry that postpartum psychosis is one of psychiatry's most biologically distinct illnesses. They called for it to become its own diagnosis. They also noted that, ironically, an insanity defense often depends on a formal diagnosis, while postpartum psychosis still lacks one.

A diagnosis is more than a label. It determines what physicians are taught to recognize, what researchers study, what insurers cover and how quickly patients receive treatment.

Postpartum psychosis can ignite within days of birth, though not every mother follows the textbook timeline. When it strikes, it is a medical emergency. Too often it is misdiagnosed and mismanaged. Our health system cannot reliably recognize an illness that our diagnostic system still fails to distinguish.

Imagine the child you wanted most in the world. Then imagine that weeks after she arrives, you look at her and cannot tell whether she is real or an object.

This is not weakness, nor evil. It is an illness in the brain. The woman this happens to is someone's daughter, someone's sister, someone's mother. She could be someone you love.

I nearly died giving birth to my second daughter, and was eventually diagnosed with postpartum obsessive-compulsive disorder and psychosis.

I'm a neurologist married to a neurosurgeon, but even as a physician, I could not recognize it in myself.

What saved me wasn't insight. It was access. Recovery in this country depends too much on geography, timing and chance. Chance should not be the backbone of a health system.

Postpartum psychosis might be rare, but untreated maternal mental illness is not. About 1 in 5 mothers experience a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder, making these conditions the most common complication of childbirth.

We know what works

Mental illness is now the leading cause of maternal death in the first year after pregnancy, and most of those deaths are preventable.

Now ask where a mother in crisis can actually go.

Fewer than 40 intensive perinatal psychiatric programs exist nationwide, and almost no hospital can admit a mother with her baby together.

For most families, specialized care is hours away, or nowhere at all.

The program that treated me shows a better future is possible. We know what works: Recognize postpartum psychosis as its own diagnosis. Screen mothers throughout the first postpartum year, not only at the six-week visit. Expand specialized mother-baby treatment programs so recovery depends on care rather than luck.

Something in me breaks when I know three children are gone, and nothing will soften that.

Still, it breaks again for their mother, and for every woman carrying this illness in silence. A court will decide innocence or guilt. What the rest of us owe is compassion.

I am not here because I was stronger than any other mother. I am here because someone recognized what I could not, while there was still time. Every mother deserves that chance. Until our diagnostic system catches up with the science and our health system learns to recognize this illness before tragedy, we will keep screaming.

Dr. Barbara "Bobbie" Decker is an adult epileptologist at Mary Washington Healthcare in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Her work focuses on women's neurology across the reproductive lifespan.

ICE has become a rogue agency. Law enforcement must speak up.

David Myers
Opinion contributor

Federal agents who killed Lorenzo Salgado Araujo in Houston on July 7 were not looking for him.

The Department of Homeland Security says its agents spent weeks surveilling a different address after a tip from a law enforcement partner, and had noted two white vans parked there. On the morning of the shooting, agents heading back toward that address saw a white van and thought the driver "resembled the target." They stopped it. The driver was Salgado Araujo, 52 – a Mexican father of three American-citizen sons, no criminal record, decades in this country, no relationship to their investigation. Within minutes an agent shot him.

DHS has not said who its agent were actually looking for, whether that person was ever found or whether Salgado Araujo's van was even one of the two vehicles agents had watched for weeks. When The Texas Tribune asked directly, DHS declined to answer.

An agency that spent weeks preparing an operation still shot a stranger driving coworkers to a construction site – and won't explain how it happened.

Less than a week later, the pattern repeated itself.

On July 13, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent in Biddeford, Maine, shot and killed Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero. The 25-year-old Colombian man was authorized to work in this country, driving to his job as he did every morning. DHS again said he wasn't the intended target.

Neither shooting has body camera footage, because DHS still doesn't require its agents to wear them in the field.

Two men. Two mornings. Two commutes ended by an agency that couldn't tell them apart from someone else.

DHS' answer to two dead men who weren't even the right men was not to slow down. It was two press releases, each filed before the evidence was in, each using the same description: a "weaponized" vehicle.

But the vehicle damage points the other way: Witnesses and photographs show bullet holes in Durán Guerrero's car, and body damage to Salgado Araujo's van consistent with having been struck by ICE vehicles, not the reverse. There was no independent video. Only grieving families and a federal narrative the facts don't support.

Only after the second killing did ICE order agents to pause most vehicle stops nationwide – the agency's own admission, in its own conduct, that it cannot yet run this operation safely. Border czar Tom Homan has already called that pause "a short-term review."

What more than three decades in law enforcement taught me

I spent 35 years in law enforcement, retiring as a commander at the San Diego County Sheriff's Office.

I have investigated officer-involved shootings.

I have taught use of force.

I now serve as a civil rights expert witness in federal and state litigation.

I write this next sentence with the full weight of that experience: What happened in Houston and in Biddeford is the predictable output of a federal agency that lacks the training, the oversight and the settled mission of a real law enforcement organization.

According to a New York Times analysis published July 8, immigration agents have shot at, or shot, at least 23 people since January 2025. As a result, six people, including three U.S. citizens, have been killed, with nearly every fatal case involving officers firing at people in vehicles.

A vigil in Houston on Aug. 7 for Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, 52, a month after he was fatally shot by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent. RONALDO SCHEMIDT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Renée Good in Minneapolis, killed. Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, killed. Julio Sosa-Celis in Minneapolis, shot in the leg – the agent who fired on him was later criminally charged after a medical exam refuted his sworn account.

Now Salgado Araujo and Durán Guerrero, six days and roughly 1,800 miles apart, both the wrong men. When the script exists before the evidence does, the process is corrupt.

ICE was built after 9/11 for combatting counterterrorism and transnational crimes. It is now running door-to-door civil immigration operations with no rigorous, standardized use-of-force training regime, no independent civilian oversight of shootings, no consistent body camera requirement and no coherent mission floor.

That is not law enforcement. That is a militia with a badge.

And the rot is spreading.

The FBI now carries roughly 45% of the Department of Justice's diverted immigration workload. Drug Enforcement Administration agents have been pulled off cartel and fentanyl investigations. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives was gutted while extremist violence rose. Joint terrorism task forces – which every serious local police department, mine included, has staffed for two decades – have been repurposed.

Every chief and sheriff whose officers still sit at those tables is now professionally attached to a federal enforcement culture that is producing dead people on neighborhood streets and outside their own front doors. Where is the local pushback?

How law enforcement responds speak volumes

In Houston, the police department publicly declared that there was "nothing that we can do" with a killing on its own streets. In Minneapolis, elected officials went the other direction – Hennepin County has criminally charged federal agents this year, local prosecutors claiming jurisdiction over crimes committed in their community.

The Supremacy Clause has limits, and those limits exist for exactly this moment.

Every silent chief, every silent sheriff, every silent command officer in this country is teaching the profession that some killings do not count. They are wrong. The public sees it. The families see it. History will see it.

Believe your eyes. Not federal press releases. Silence is not neutrality – silence is authorization.

David Myers, a retired commander of the San Diego Sheriff's Office, is a civil rights and police accountability expert witness.

USA TODAY

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REVIEW

Mercedes' new EV can go a long way

Top CLA's EPA-rated range is 374 miles

Mark Phelan
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

The number of new electric vehicles hitting the market plummeted when the U.S. government pulled the plug on support for the auto industry's adoption of EVs a year ago, but the 2027 Mercedes-Benz CLA 250+ Electric would be a winner no matter how many fresh competitors it faced.

Exciting performance and handling, driving range that looks like a typo, and clean elegant styling make the CLA the best new sedan or coupe I've driven this year – regardless of drivetrain: electric, hybrid or solely internal-combustion.

Speaking of which, Mercedes understands that EVs aren't right for everybody. A hybrid CLA will go on sale shortly. Also coming is the GLA compact SUV, which also will have both electric and hybrid models.

The new Mercedes Modular Architecture underpins the new CLA, GLA and GLB, another small SUV.

The CLA won me over completely during a recent weeklong evaluation. I look forward to getting acquainted with its siblings.

The CLA 250+ Electric by the numbers

The CLA is a compact sport sedan. Built on a new architecture, it has notably more passenger space than previous generation ICE (internal combustion engine) CLA.

Prices start at $47,950 for a rear-drive model with a single electric motor. All prices exclude $1,350 destination charge.

Rear-drive models are called CLA 250+ Electric because a single motor on their rear axle generates 268 horsepower and 247 pound-feet of torque.

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The exterior of a 2027 Mercedes-Benz CLA 250+ on July 28 in Detroit.
JUSTIN WAN/USA TODAY NETWORK

The 2027 Lincoln Nautilus Black Label is a midsize SUV built in China.

Tariffs lead Ford to build more in U.S.

CEO explains why company pulling Lincolns from China

Jamie L. LaReau Detroit Free Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

Ford Motor Co. CEO Jim Farley said the automaker's decision to move production of its Lincoln Nautilus midsize SUV from China to the United States by the end of the decade was not made lightly, and it centered on two big considerations: Ford will design all-new Lincoln vehicles in the next few years and the present economic burden of tariffs on Ford.

• Also, Farley said in an exclusive interview with the Detroit Free Press, part of the USA TODAY Network, that with quality improving in Ford's U.S. manufacturing facilities, it was a good time to make the move. On June 25, Ford was ranked No. 1 among mainstream brands on the JD Power's Initial Quality Survey.

"We now have the confidence that we can compete with Genesis or Lexus imported outside the U.S. We made a lot of progress," Farley told the Detroit Free Press. "Now, we're fully confident that we can make these Lincolns in the U.S. and be fully competitive with the global standard that we see for the luxury business."

Analysts, meanwhile, said the decision to move Lincoln production offers Ford the chance to relaunch the luxury brand with a big splash.

"With new models due to hit showrooms around the 2031 model year, Lincoln has a unique opportunity to relaunch the brand in spectacular fashion," Sam Fiorani, vice president of global vehicle forecasting at AutoForecast Solutions, said. "Lincoln has always lagged behind the major players in terms of volume even with a range of excellent products."

The changes coming

The Dearborn-based automaker announced Aug. 12 that starting in 2030, it will increase the production of Lincoln vehicles in the United States, creating thousands of jobs in the process. It means Ford will stop importing the Nautilus, which it makes in China.

In an interview with the Detroit Free Press on Aug. 13, Farley declined to specify which U.S. plants would get the

See FARLEY, Page 2B

Ford Motor CEO Jim Farley walks near a Ford Mustang GTD display at Laguna Seca Raceway in Salinas, California on Aug. 13 during Monterey Car Week.
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY FORD MOTO CO.

"Just like Ford, the Lincolns are made in our North America plants and the quality is going from like 23rd to first in initial quality."
Jim Farley
CEO of Ford

Washing your car by hand is a good practice

Keith Laing
USA TODAY

Summer is winding down, but you may still want your car looking good before the season ends.

With new car prices approaching $50,000, many owners want to keep their vehicles looking their best for years to come.

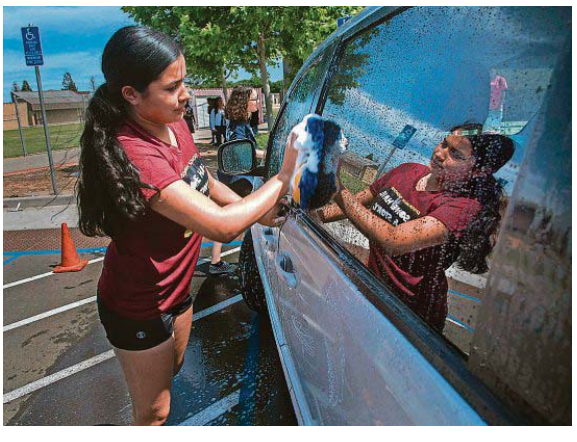
According to Consumer Reports, "frequent washing is also the best way to maintain a new-car finish and detect blemishes and other potential issues, such as rust or loosening trim." The website said washing a car by hand can also be therapeutic for some drivers.

The USA TODAY Cars team looked at Consumer Reports tips for handwashing to make sure you don't accidentally damage your vehicle.

1. Choose the right soap

Consumer Reports said owners should avoid household cleaning agents such as hand soap or dishwashing detergent on car exteriors because they are not formulated for car paint and could strip off the protective wax that is on most cars.

Instead, Consumer Reports recommends a dedicated car-wash product that is milder and designed for use on car paint. Suds should be applied with a large, soft natural sponge, the website said.



According to Consumer Reports, "frequent washing is also the best way to maintain a new-car finish and detect blemishes and other potential issues, such as rust or loosening trim." CLIFFORD OTO/USA TODAY NETWORK

2. Don't wash your car when the exterior is hot

It's already hot outside. Don't make it worse by washing your car while its body is still hot.

Consumer Reports advises against washing a car immediately after driving or after it has been parked in direct sunlight because heat can cause soap and water to dry too quickly, leaving behind spots and deposits.

3. Use a separate sponge to clean the tires

Your tires do your car's dirty work. They're rolling on roads nobody would consider clean enough to eat off.

So don't use the same sponge on your car's paint that you put on the wheels. Consumer Reports said tires may be coated with sand and other debris that could mar your car's finish.

See CAR WASH, Page 2B

Mercedes

Continued from Page 1B

All-wheel-drive CLAs go by CLA 350 4Matic Electric. "4Matic" is Mercedes-speak for AWD. The CLA 350 has a motor on each axle for 349 hp and 380 pound-feet.

CLA 350 4Matic prices start at $50,500.

I tested a very well-equipped rear-drive CLA 250+ that stickered at $61,530.

Options on my test car included:

- AMG Line package.
- Night package.
- 19-inch range optimized summer tires.
- Burmester audio.
- CCS charging adapter.
- Sky Control dimmable fixed glass roof.
- 19-inch AMG five-spoke wheels.
- AMG black and red MB Tex interior.

The steering wheel and the dashboard of a 2027 Mercedes-Benz CLA 250+.
PHOTOS BY JUSTIN WAN/USA TODAY NETWORK

You haven't seen this in an EV before

Unlike most EVs, the CLA has a multispeed automatic transmission. Mounted on the rear axle, it has two gears and helps the car achieve both high efficiency and exciting acceleration. Nearly all EVs have a single-speed transmission. They don't need multiple gear ratios because electric motors produce full torque as soon as they start, unlike internal combustion engines that need to rev up to generate peak output.

The transmission adds some complexity, but pays off in exciting performance and impressive range and energy efficiency.

I expect we'll see more EVs adopting multispeed transmissions as the technology matures and competition intensifies.

The motor on the 350's front axle has a single-speed direct drive, like the motors in nearly all other EVs.

2027 Mercedes CLA Electric trim levels and prices

- CLA 250+ Electric: $47,950
- CLA 350 4Matic Electric: $50,500

Note: All prices exclude $1,350 destination charge

Jaw-dropping range

Thanks to the transmission, special tires and other goodies, the top CLA's EPA-rated driving range on a charge is a whopping 374 miles from a relatively modest 85 kW battery.

My loaded test car was rated at 317 miles because of summer tires and other features. Based on my week driving, I'd guess all but the heaviest-footed drivers will do considerably better. Mercedes is cautious with its range figures.

The interior of a 2027 Mercedes-Benz CLA 250+.

Charging is fast, thanks to an 800-volt electrical architecture. The CLA can charge at up to 320 kW. That allows the battery to go from 10% to 80% range in as little as 22 minutes, or 200 miles range in 10 minutes.

My CLA's projected range consistently exceeded the EPA projection.

Driving impressions

As you'd hope, the CLA 250+ Electric drives like a small German sport sedan. The steering is quick and responsive. Excellent road holding, in part thanks to "19-inch range-optimized summer tires." That's a new one on me, but they work, with plenty of grip and less cabin noise than I'm accustomed to from summer tires.

The brakes are confident, easy to modulate and – unlike many previous MB EVs – offer one-pedal driving for max energy regeneration when decelerating.

Passenger space is good, particularly rear leg room. Rear seat ingress and egress has improved markedly from the previous CLA, which felt to me like a closed-head injury waiting to happen.

The 10.3-cubic-foot rear trunk is small but usable. It's complemented by a 1.4-cubic-foot front trunk – where the engine will go in the hybrid.

Attractive synthetic black and red MB Tex material covers the doors and seats. It's comfortable and easy to clean.

The instrument panel features three separate screens under a single car-wide pane of glass: 10.25-inch instrument cluster, 14-inch primary touch screen in the middle and 14-inch passenger touch screen.

2027 Mercedes CLA Electric key features

- Electric power
- 85 kW usable power battery
- NACS charging port
- 320 kW max charging
- 800v electrical architecture
- Rear- or all-wheel drive
- Two-speed automatic transmission on rear axle
- EPA rated driving range up to 374 miles
- Heat pump
- Adaptive front lighting system
- 850-watt, 16-speaker Burmester audio

What could be better?

A fixed glass sunroof stretches above the passenger compartment. My car had the optional Sky Control glass with tinting that can be transformed from clear to opaque. You also can make portions of the roof clear or opaque. The tinting and thermal insulation are more effective than I've found in many cars with full-cabin sunroofs, but the glass panel still got hot to the touch on summer days. Shouldn't a $50,000 sticker price cover a fabric shade?

Some touch screen icons are counter-intuitive. Why are the chiclets for ambient lighting and interior design themes features buried in a folder called "apps" rather than under the car-shaped icon for vehicle features? Some automakers seem to think a button for apps makes them seem cool and contemporary. I think features that are easy to find and use are cool and contemporary.

Why can't Mercedes's virtual assistant tell me how to adjust vehicle features like those?

Why buy a 2027 Mercedes-Benz CLA 250+ Electric?

Forget electric vs. internal combustion. The 2027 CLA 250+ Electric is the best new car I've driven this year, and a strong contender for the best compact sport sedan, period.

2027 Mercedes-Benz 250+ Electric at a glance

- Compact electric sport sedan
- Rear- or all-wheel-drive hybrid or electric luxury sedan
- Seats 5
- EV on sale now. Hybrid sales begin summer 2026.
- Base price: $47,950. All prices exclude $1,350 destination charge.
- Model tested: 2027 CLA 250+ Electric (RWD)
- Price as tested: $61,530
- Power: Single electric motor on rear axle
- Output: 268 hp, 248 pound-feet of torque
- EPA estimated battery range: Up to 374 miles
- Transmission: Two-speed automatic
- Battery size: 85 kW usable
- Maximum charging speed: DC: 320 kW AC: 9.6 kW
- Charging time: DC: 10%-80% in 22 minutes
- 0-60 mph: 6.6 seconds (estimate)
- Top speed: 130 mph
- Wheelbase: 109.8 inches
- Length: 185.9 inches
- Width: 73 inches (79 with mirrors)
- Height: 57.8 inches
- Passenger space: NA
- Cargo space: 11.7 cubic feet (10.3 rear trunk/ 1.4 front)
- Curb weight: 4,553 pounds
- Assembled: Rastatt, Germany

Farley

Continued from Page 1B

extra Lincoln production or where the added jobs would land. He also declined to specify any changes to Lincoln's lineup of vehicles other than to confirm that Lincoln will design all-new vehicles in the next few years.

"We won't want to be specific. We want to talk to the [United Automobile Workers] about the specifics first," Farley said. "But I would say, just the employment for moving high-volume Lincoln models to the U.S., obviously, will be thousands of [jobs] for people."

In the States, Lincoln sells three vehicles: the midsize Nautilus and Aviator SUVs and the Navigator large SUV. It had also sold the compact SUV, Corsair, but discontinued it and the Ford Escape in December. Those two vehicles had been built at Ford's Louisville Assembly Plant in Kentucky but Ford is retooling that plant to start making an all-electric midsize pickup called Fathom there early in 2027.

Ford currently builds the Nautilus, its two-row SUV, at its plant in Hangzhou, China, and sells the vehicle in North America and China. Ford also builds the midsize luxury sedan, Lincoln Z, in China through its Changan Ford joint venture. It is sold only in China.

Fiorani said a redesigned lineup built in the United States will allow Lincoln to capture a new buyer.

"A convergence of new vehicles arriving in a 12-month period opens the door to introduce Lincoln to a new generation of buyers, making it an alternative to the better-known players," Fiorani said.

Showcasing redesigned luxury SUVs and possibly new models, Fiorani said, gives Lincoln "a chance to move up the ranks of luxury brands, if harnessed properly."

The making of the decision

Farley said Ford's decision to move Lincoln production to the States took a year and it was brought on by the idea of giving Lincoln an all-new designed lineup – which costs a lot of money in terms of retooling plants and securing suppliers – as well as considering the economic impact from President Donald Trump's tariffs.

"The Trump administration came in and they were very crystal clear to us that they want, even the most American company, like Ford, in terms of production, to build more in the U.S.," Farley said. "When they put in the tariffs on automotive, in some cases, they're 50-plus percent higher on these vehicles we're importing [from China], very quickly it became obvious to us that we have to make a tough choice here."

In March 2025, Trump put 25% tariffs on all imported vehicles and car parts. There were already some tariffs in place on exports from China, which is why the additional 25% tariff could add up to more than a 50% tariff an importer must pay. A tariff is a tax an importer pays to bring a good over a border. For Ford, its total tariffs amounted to a roughly $2 billion expense last year.

Farley said the Lincoln production move was a tough choice also, in part, because under former CEO Alan Mulally and with Farley's input at the time, Ford relaunched Lincoln in China in 2014 and started manufacturing there in March 2020 at the Changan Ford joint venture factory. "We decided to position Lincoln as an American brand. Our concept was to have American vehicles, like Navigator, sold in China and that allowed us to have one model for both markets," Farley said. "It didn't make sense for us to have the same model built in the U.S. and in China. Our quality in China was excellent and ... because there were no tariffs, we decided to save money in a way and tool up our one or two Lincolns in China, just like GM did with Buick and other companies did."

Ford eventually shifted to build the Nautilus in China for sale in the United States and the vehicle is the brand's top seller. In the second quarter, Lincoln sold 10,505 Nautilus vehicles, up 6.4% from the year-ago quarter. It was the strongest second quarter ever for the nameplate and nearly two-thirds of the buyers were conquest buyers – those buyers who had previously purchased other premium utility brands.

A new Nautilus

Farley said his team considered the high cost of tariffs and the fact that vehicle quality in its U.S. plants was "getting so much more competitive," so "why don't we localize [production] because monetarily, it will make more sense? So that's what we've done."

When asked whether Ford plans to dramatically redesign the Nautilus, Farley again declined to be specific about models, but he said Ford will be investing in a "pretty major change for Nautilus."

On Aug. 13, Ford put out a media release outlining some of the design changes to the 2027 Nautilus saying it will have "a bold new face, more opportunities for personalization and intuitive technology designed to make every drive feel more effortless, personal and restorative." It will also have a more detailed grille, a redesigned hood and offer buyers several wheel options and new exterior paint colors, Ford said.

Farley said Ford's improving quality story helped make the decision to move production to the United States easier.

"Just like Ford, the Lincolns are made in our North America plants and the quality is going from like 23rd to first in initial quality," Farley said. "Three or four years ago, when we were making these kind of choices, that was less clear. We were working really hard. I love the fact that Ford's quality story is now an overnight story that took three years or four years. The good news is that we've landed pretty well, but it's the first inning of a nine-inning game. You're never done with quality."

Car wash

Continued from Page 1B

4. Move the sponge in straight lines

Car owners of a certain age may be familiar with the phrase "wax on, wax off" from "The Karate Kid." It turns out, Mr. Miyagi's instructions for his student, Daniel, in the classic movie are a bit off.

Consumer Reports said that moving the sponge in circles can create "light but noticeable scratches" that are called swirl marks. Also, don't keep using a sponge after it is dropped on the ground, the magazine recommends.

5. Rinse before washing

Any good wash should start with a thorough rinse. That's true for human bodies and cars.

Consumer Reports recommends thoroughly rinsing a car first to remove loose dirt and debris that could cause scratches. If you have one, use an adjustable hose nozzle. Otherwise, a bucket of water works, too.

6. Use soft towels for drying

Consumer Reports said that air drying your car will leave watermarks caused by minerals in hard water. Also, drying with an abrasive towel could leave hairline scratches, the organization said. The best course is to use a natural or synthetic chamois cloth or soft terry towel and blot the water instead of dragging the towel across the paint, Consumer Reports said. The group said the drying process can be sped up by using a soft squeegee to remove water from the vehicle's body.

50★States

News from across the USA

ALABAMA Montgomery: A New York City man has been sentenced for his role in a debit card scheme that authorities say resulted in more than $214,000 in losses in the River Region area. On Aug. 12, Eric Kendrie Shuler was sentenced to 87 months in federal prison on charges of conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud and aggravated identity theft, said Thomas Govan, United States attorney for the Middle District of Alabama.

ALASKA Juneau: Gov. Mike Dunleavy permitted an omnibus agriculture bill that names the giant cabbage the Alaska state vegetable, KTOO reported.

ARIZONA Phoenix: School districts in rural Arizona, from Prescott to the reservations in Pima County, have begun including affordable housing in teachers' contracts to help fill classrooms.

ARKANSAS Little Rock: More than 13,400 residents in Sebastian and Crawford counties, enrolled in Arkansas' ARHOME Medicaid expansion program, are expected to continue receiving health coverage beyond Jan. 1, 2027, even as federal officials move away from renewing the program in its current form.

COLORADO Denver: A new study adds to the picture of Colorado's roads being among the least safe in the country. Colorado has the 14th most dangerous roads for drivers in the nation, according to the study by Ravid & Associates, a Detroit personal injury law firm.

CONNECTICUT East Windsor: Police said a man is in custody after his 1-year-old son died after being left alone in a car Aug. 15, WFSB reported. Kevin Pell was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a minor and is currently being held on a $1 million bond, according to the news outlet.

DELAWARE Dover: Delaware is no longer alerting the public each time water testing at ocean beaches indicates bacteria levels exceed the advisory threshold.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington: Crews are busy making sure all 117 schools across the DC Public Schools district are ready for the students' return on Aug. 24, DC News Now reported.

FLORIDA Jacksonville: The first phase of UF Health St. Johns' new health and wellness campus at Durbin Park, including a $285 million, 99-bed hospital, is expected to open by late September.

GEORGIA Watkinsville: BattlBox, a Georgia-based outdoor and survival company, will host the 2026 BattlGames Sept. 19-20 at the Georgia Bushcraft property in Watkinsville. The two-day competition will feature 10 contestants from across the United States competing in a series of survival-themed challenges for a $25,000 grand prize.

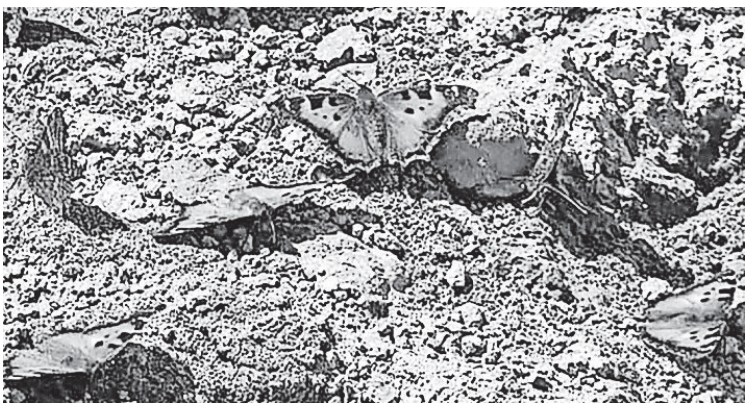
HAWAII Honolulu: The Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Insurance Division is urging residents to file insurance claims for damage to homes, vehicles and personal property as soon as possible, HawaiiNewsNow reported. The department also said residents should request a claim number and confirm filing or documentation submission deadlines, the news outlet reported.

IDAHO Boise: Money raised from the sale of the Idaho Women Veterans Medallion will go toward the "continued care" and operations of two state veteran cemeteries, Idaho Capital Sun reported. According to the news outlet, Idaho State Veterans Cemeteries recently received a $47,675 check from Julie Ellsworth, state treasurer.

ILLINOIS Channahon: INEOS Styrolution announced it will close its polystyrene facility in Channahon. The company plans to lay off 94 employees, according to information submitted to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, between Sept. 4 and Dec. 31, according to a WARN report.

INDIANA Muncie: Accutech Systems Corp. has been named to the Inc. 5000 list of the nation's fastest-growing private companies for the fifth consecutive time. The recognition by Inc. magazine is part of its annual ranking of privately owned businesses across the United States with the strongest three-year revenue growth, according to a community announcement.

HIGHLIGHT: CALIFORNIA



California Tortoiseshell butterflies spend summer at Lassen Volcanic National Park. PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mineral: It's a mid-summer black and orange butterfly bonanza on Lassen Peak. California Tortoiseshell butterflies are filling the air — after eating their fill — in Lassen Volcanic National Park. "Tortoiseshells are seen in high numbers on tops of peaks such as Lassen Peak," the National Park Service said. "Summer breeding takes place in early migration when migrant females lay eggs on new buds of the high-altitude Ceanothus such as tobacco brush and snowbrush." Hikers reported massive numbers of butterflies on Lassen Peak in late July, with the insects taking to the air in clouds when people startle them.

IOWA Ames: Nathan Schade, 15, was crowned the 2026 Iowa State Fair mullet champion on Aug. 15.

KANSAS Topeka: Washburn University received a major donation for health care education. JuliAnn Mazachek, Washburn University president, announced a partnership and $7.5 million investment from Stormont Vail Health.

KENTUCKY Frankfort: A Kentucky State University student has filed a new lawsuit against the school and several of its officials, alleging the university "fraudulently induced" students to enroll in an unaccredited online Master of Social Work program. The suit alleges the program was not accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and seeks class action status to represent other students enrolled in the program during the 2025-26 academic year.

LOUISIANA New Orleans: Louisiana is turning to an alien insect to help control the spread of giant salvinia that's clogging many lakes and bayous. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has released nearly 50,000 giant salvinia weevils into the Saline-Larto Complex of lakes and connecting canals in Catahoula, LaSalle, Avoyelles and Rapides parishes to eat the invasive aquatic weeds.

MAINE York: Officials were recently told that the ambulance service's deficit is far larger than expected. Town Finance Director Wendy Anderson told the board the York Ambulance Association is now projecting a $264,000 deficit, significantly higher than the $180,000 they requested earlier this year to keep operations running through the end of the fiscal year.

MARYLAND Hagerstown: The IAFF Local 1605 Foundation awarded $123,850 to 25 charities and first-responder initiatives following the 2026 Bonanza Extravaganza, pushing the organization's community giving total past $2.5 million since the fundraiser began in 2006.

MASSACHUSETTS Worcester: The state announced nearly $25 million in funding to help increase early literacy among elementary students, with many districts in MetroWest getting a piece of the funding to help with initiatives aimed at the earliest readers getting up to grade level. Gov. Maura Healey announced $24.7 million would be handed out to 71 school districts to strengthen literacy instruction, with a particular focus on students between first and third grade.

MICHIGAN Lansing: Leadership at the Eastside Lansing Food Co-op, a community grocery store, told its membership they'll begin the process of shutting the store down if sales don't meet an agreed upon standard in September. In an email to the co-op's members, board President Holly Jo Sparks said the store, which opened in 2022, is "overall, operating at a loss, and it has been for some time."

MINNESOTA St. Paul: Over 1.1 million Minnesotans voted in the Aug. 11 primary election, or a quarter of eligible voters, setting the record for most votes cast in a primary, Secretary of State Steve Simon said.

MISSISSIPPI Jackson: Former Jackson mayoral candidate Zach Servis has sued the city nearly 15 months after police escorted him from a Jackson City Council meeting for wearing a campaign shirt.

MISSOURI Springfield: The Missouri Department of Transportation will lower the allowable weight for certain vehicles on the eastbound U.S. Route 60 bridge over Lake Springfield, a change that will remain in place until the structure is replaced.

MONTANA Kalispell: Justin Turner, an 11-year veteran of the Kalispell Police Department, was recently named Montana Officer of the Year, KPAX reported.

NEBRASKA Lincoln: An event marking the 100th anniversary of Park Middle School included tours for families and current and former students, KOLN reported.

NEVADA Carson City: A federal judge rejected the Trump administration's demand for unredacted Nevada voter information in an order on Aug. 14.

NEW HAMPSHIRE Brentwood: Accused of running a "Ponzi scheme" through his former Epping construction company, Ricky Southers has been convicted of felony theft by unauthorized taking.

NEW JERSEY Pompton Lakes: After more than three decades of cleanup work, a plume of cancer-causing solvents left by DuPont remains beneath hundreds of homes in Pompton Lakes, state environmental records show. A settlement approved Aug. 7 in federal court now requires the companies responsible to finish the cleanup job, regardless of the final cost.

NEW MEXICO Las Cruces: The Domenici Public Policy Conference hosted by New Mexico State University is scheduled for Sept. 8-9 at the Las Cruces Convention Center.

NEW YORK Poughkeepsie: The "door kick challenge" is the latest social media trend causing issues in Dutchess County, and it has prompted public safety warnings over the potential consequences. Beekman, LaGrange and Poughkeepsie have reported incidents.

NORTH CAROLINA Pender County: A 1,000-home development that would potentially transform a rural area of Pender County hit a significant setback. The county planning board voted to recommend denial of the conditional rezoning the project requires to proceed.

NORTH DAKOTA Bismarck: North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley is urging state Sen. Jeff Magrum to withdraw a proposed legislative resolution seeking presidential clemency for Scott Faul and Yorie Kahl, who were convicted in connection with the 1983 Medina shootout that killed two U.S. marshals, KVRR reported.

OHIO Cincinnati: A new event aims to make niche sports more popular across the city. The Cincinnati Regional Sports Commission, which is backing the Rec Fest Cincinnati, says the event could also open the door to bring niche world championships to the city.

OKLAHOMA Edmond: City council approved 850 units of multifamily housing at Legacy at Covell, the retail-restaurant-entertainment hub at Interstate 35 and Covell Road.

OREGON Salem: Salem's switch to city-run emergency service in 2025 resulted in reduced reliance on outside agencies, better response performance and improved ambulance availability during the fire department's busiest year on record. Salem Fire Chief David Gerboth presented one year of emergency response data to Salem City Council on Aug. 10.

PENNSYLVANIA Erie: A third KFC location has been closed after two others were shuttered by the Erie County Health Department in recent weeks. Tabbassum Mumtaz, who owns all three restaurants, could not be reached for comment.

RHODE ISLAND North Kingstown: The Department of Environmental Management has fined a new asphalt plant in the Quonset Business Park $8,500, and ordered it to come up with an odor mitigation plan within 60 days.

SOUTH CAROLINA Greenville: South Carolina has a new hiking trail named after a Greenville native. The 1.5-mile out-and-back trail, named the Henry Passage, is a new section of the Palmetto Trail in the Blue Ridge Escarpment, featuring an elevation change of approximately 800 feet.

SOUTH DAKOTA Sioux Falls: Lawmakers, politicians and educators broke ground Aug. 14 on the future site of the James Abdnor Center for Advanced Manufacturing at Southeast Technical College. The center will link to the current Ed Wood Trade and Industry Center on campus, expanding room for the college's welding laboratory in the process.

TENNESSEE Nashville: Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner and Deputy Gov. Stuart C. McWhorter and Kyoto Fusioneering officials have announced the company will move its U.S. headquarters to Oak Ridge from Seattle.

TEXAS Dallas: Gov. Greg Abbott directed a review of all state grants awarded to entities that operate airports in Texas, after reports surfaced that Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport would be adding ablution facilities. In an Aug. 14 letter, Abbott argued ablution facilities used for Islamic washing rituals are unconstitutional.

UTAH Tooele: The Tooele County Sheriff's Office is investigating animal neglect reports at Ivie Acres Farm, KUTV reported. According to a sheriff's office sergeant, the state veterinarian's office was consulted before animals were removed from the petting zoo and placed with other organizations, the news outlet reported.

VERMONT Stowe: Priceline recently released a list of the top 10 destinations for autumn leaf peeping, based on an analysis of October hotel searches. Although no New England destinations made the top three, one Vermont location still made the list: Stowe ranked at No. 9.

VIRGINIA Weyers Cave: Blue Ridge Community College Aviation program is expanding, doubling the student cap from 25 to 50 for the upcoming fall class, a significant step toward expanding Virginia's plane maintenance workforce.

WASHINGTON Joyce: Elwha Legacy Forests Coalition has raised about $260,000 to protect trees in the Twin Rivers Watershed on the Olympic Peninsula, KING5 reported.

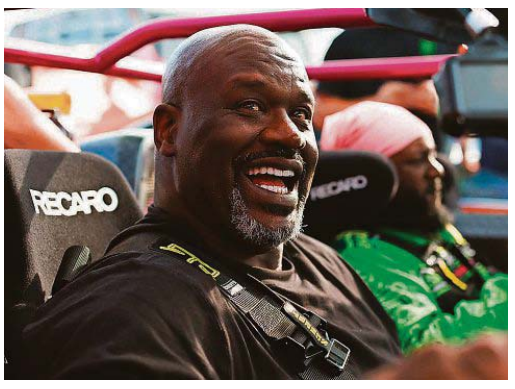
WEST VIRGINIA Morgantown: NextEra Energy Transmission granted the Monongalia County Fair a $25,000 grant to help complete a new livestock barn, WDTV reported.

WISCONSIN De Pere: Charlotte Pipe and Foundry confirmed in July its subsidiary, Neenah Foundry, acquired De Pere Foundry, but declined to provide details of the acquisition. State property transaction records indicate Neenah Foundry LLC paid more than $1.5 million for the 7.5-acre property on De Pere's west side.

WYOMING Teton County: County planning commissioners recently voted to approve a family's plan to develop their South Park ranch land with 557 homes, Jackson Hole News & Guide reported.

From USA TODAY Network and wire reports

Shaq's dream ride is a stretch Corvette Z06



NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal has a $100,000 Corvette custom built to solve his height problem.
PROVIDED BY GRIDLIFE NAPPY BOY AUTOMOTIVE

Terry Baddoo
USA TODAY

NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal spent years trying to make a series of exotic cars fit his giant 7-foot-1 frame.

"I've wasted so much money trying to get these $300,000 luxury cars, stretch them and fit them. Never end up keeping them," O'Neal said.

Now, having finally conceded that modifying normal-size cars doesn't quite work, O'Neal has gone fully custom, having a unique Corvette Z06 built to his specifications by Effortless Motors of Riverside, California.

"[The] Corvette's under $100,000," O'Neal said. "And he made that thing look so good."

The custom Corvette kept the standard mid-engine 5.5-liter LT6 V8, but the rest of the car was heavily modified. Shaq was given more legroom, there was custom interior work, a specialized steering wheel, and the superstar's signature Superman branding was front and center.

It's a car built around O'Neal and his love for all things automotive, which includes an ambition to race.

At the GRIDLIFE Summer Apex motorsports and music festival at Watkins Glen International in New York, he teamed up with his rap partner T-Pain for a ride-along that could lead to something bigger.

"Me and him was drifting in one of his cars," O'Neal said. "So I called him the other day and I said, 'We should do a show where we do a celebrity race.' "

The proposed cross-country event would start and end in Atlanta, and include several legs running through Miami, Dallas, El Paso, Texas, and Los Angeles, with a $2 million prize for the winner.

Whether the race ever happens, the idea is pure Shaq, a celebrity who's renowned for indulging his passions, of which cars are near the top of the list.

Here's where it costs you the most to insure your car

Keith Laing
USA TODAY

Car shoppers are paying more than ever for new models, and the cost of insuring them has also been going up in recent years.

The average annual cost of full coverage car insurance in the United States in the first half of 2026 was $2,237, according to a study that released by Insurify. The group found that insurance rates rose in 27 states in the first half of 2026, with drivers in seven states plus Washington, DC, paying more than $3,000 annual for full auto insurance.

The finding comes as the average price of a new car rose to $49,855 in July, according to Cox Automotive's Kelley Blue Book. The average June price for new cars was up 0.2% from June's average of $49,757, and it was also a 1.9% increase over July 2025's average, according to the group.

Insurify said drivers can't expect to get any breaks on insurance right now, either.

"In 2025, car insurance prices did something they don't normally do: fall," the group said. "But 2026 trends suggest that this decline is ending."

With that in mind, the USA TODAY Cars team took a look at the 10 most expensive states, plus the District of Columbia, to insure a car.

Insurify said drivers can't expect to get any breaks on insurance right now, MARIANVEJCIK/GETTY IMAGES

1. Washington, DC

- **Average annual cost (June):** $3,880
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** -7%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $3,955

2. Maryland

- **Average annual cost (June):** $3,646
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** +1% (+$46)
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $3,664

3. Rhode Island

- **Average annual cost (June):** $3,611
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** +2%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $3,600

4. Michigan

- **Average annual cost (June):** $3,229
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** +2%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $3,217

5. Georgia

- **Average annual cost (June):** $3,109
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** -1%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $3,101

6. Delaware

- **Average annual cost (June):** $3,100
- **Projected change, second half of 2026:** +2%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $3,163

7. South Carolina

- **Average annual cost (June):** $3,075
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** 0%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $3,075

8. Nevada

- **Average annual cost (June):** $3,039
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** +4%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $3,090

9. New Jersey

- **Average annual cost (June):** $2,923
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** -5%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $2,966

10. New York

- **Average annual cost (June):** $2,840
- **Cost change, first half of 2026:** -5%
- **End of 2026 projected cost:** $2,880

THINKING BIG

Jessica Pegula embraces the grind ahead of US Open

Cydney Henderson USA TODAY

American tennis star Jessica Pegula has dreamed about what it would be like to win the first Grand Slam of her career. She said achieving that milestone at the US Open, her favorite of the four slams, would be even sweeter. ● "My goal is to win the tournament," Pegula told USA TODAY Sports ahead of the 2026 US Open. "It is my favorite place to play just purely because I am an American and I'm from New York State, and I do think people get behind me and encourage me a lot more than maybe even some other Americans."

Pegula has experienced both triumph and heartbreak at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Queens, New York. She advanced to the first and only Grand Slam final of her career at the 2024 US Open, but ultimately lost to Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets. "I do feel like it adds a little bit more pressure," Pegula added.

Pegula spoke to USA TODAY Sports ahead of the fourth and final major of the year through her partnership with Vital Proteins, the official collagen partner of the US Open.

Jessica Pegula competes against Simona Waltert during the Cincinnati Open on Aug. 15. PHOTOS BY AARON DOSTER/IMAGN IMAGES

Pegula 'visualized' winning US Open

Pegula, 32, is considered a late bloomer in the tennis world. She made her professional debut in 2009, but a string of serious injuries delayed her ascension. Pegula broke through and won her first WTA title at age 25 in 2019. She cracked the Top 50 for the first time in 2021, made it into the Top 20 by January 2022 and reached the Top 10 five months later at age 28.

Pegula is currently ranked No. 3 in the world, the highest ranking of her career. But there's one accolade missing from her mantel – a Grand Slam title. The thought of winning a major, however, brings her mixed emotions.

"I always like to visualize and see how I would feel or what that moment would feel like. And it's interesting. I have a lot of different reactions to it," said Pegula, who won her third-round match Aug. 17 at the Cincinnati Open. "Of course I'm like, wow ... dream come true since I was a kid having these crazy goals. But then at the same time, I don't think it would change much ... I think tennis is kind of cruel that way where you have to move on really, really quickly."

See PEGULA, Page 7C

Matt Hayes
College football columnist
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Game is already breaking people's brains

There's a dance going on here, and I'm not exactly sure what in the world is going on with the greatest rivalry in sports.

But we should all thank the tortured offseason college football gods that we're here for it.

New Michigan coach Kyle Whittingham says he doesn't hate Ohio State, he just wants to win games. Specifically, The Game.

Ohio State coach Ryan Day says it's no big deal, he's just going to change decades of tradition and move Senior Day celebration to the season opener to avoid distractions of preparing for You Know Who in You Know What on the last weekend of the regular season.

Moved the team's senior tackle event from Michigan week, too. Even told The Best Damn Band in The Land its annual practice visit during Michigan week is no longer.

Frankly, the fact that Day has the guts – and the capital – to stand up to TBDBiTL should be all you need to know about the bizarre twists to The Game, 2026.

Or the game within The Game.

"Hate is a strong word," Whittingham said of Ohio State last month during Big Ten Media Days.

And you would have thought a bomb was dropped right smack in the middle of sacred ground. An impact that oddly left Ohio State Buckeyes fans losing

See HAYES, Page 7C

Tyler Dragon
USA TODAY

Von Miller's leadership huge plus for Cowboys

Von Miller has won two Super Bowl titles since he entered the NFL in 2011. The Dallas Cowboys haven't even sniffed an NFC championship game in that span. Miller's experience is what could have the biggest influence on his new team.

"What he's accomplished is incredible. What you hear about him as a teammate is even more incredible," Cowboys coach Brian Schottenheimer said on Aug. 17. "He's going to add a lot. Not just on the field, but off the field as well."

Miller

Miller is undoubtedly one of the best pass rushers of his generation. Miller was the recipient of the NFL's Defensive Player of the Year award in 2011. Plus, the veteran has been named to the Pro Bowl eight times and has been a first- or second-team All-Pro seven times. His 138.5 career sacks are the most among active players.

Yet the Super Bowl 50 MVP award and being part of the Los Angeles Rams' Super Bowl 56 squad are the factors that should make him invaluable to a Cowboys franchise – and an owner – starved for a Super Bowl.

The Cowboys have made no secret of their desire to reach the football mountaintop. Quarterback Dak Prescott wore

See DRAGON, Page 7C

LIV Golf ends 2026 season this week in Indy

Tim Schmitt
Golfweek | USA TODAY Network

On Aug. 14, LIV Golf quietly stopped selling tickets for its team championship event at The Cardinal at Saint John's Resort near Detroit, proving that the tournament would not be played amid LIV's ongoing funding crisis. The championship had been scheduled for Aug. 27-30 and was set to serve as the season-ending showcase of the league's team competition.

A new report, however, suggests LIV Golf's handling of the event's apparent cancellation may have been far from transparent. Rather than providing fans with clear communication and timely updates, the league appears to have quietly pulled the plug, raising questions about whether the shutdown was managed more to avoid scrutiny than to deliver an honest customer experience.

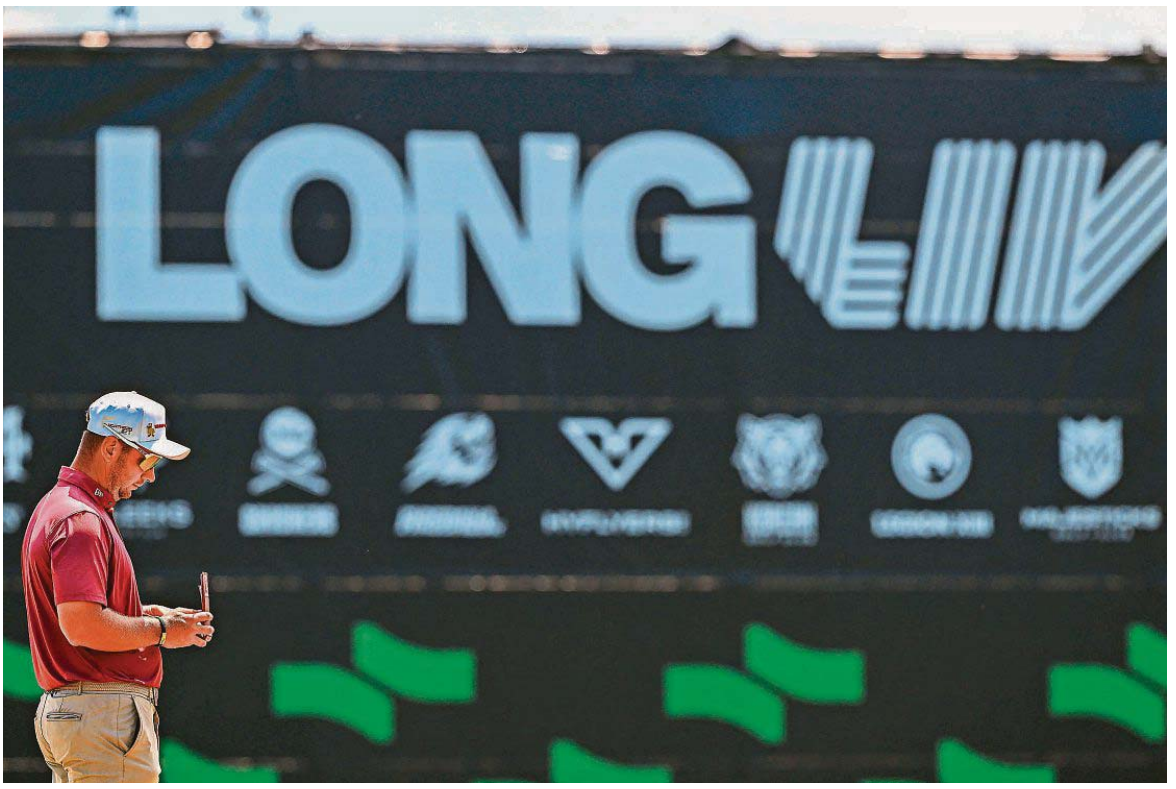
No tournament infrastructure was erected at the course that welcomed tens of thousands of spectators for LIV Golf's 2025 Team Championship, the league's first event in Michigan.

Yet as recently as the night of Aug. 12, LIV Golf was still selling tickets for this year's championship. By Thursday afternoon, however, fans visiting the league's website were greeted with a terse message: "The tickets you were looking for are no longer available." No additional information was provided, including whether ticket holders would receive refunds.

Meanwhile, the league confirmed on Monday that this week's event at Indianapolis will mark the end of the season, and potentially, the end of the league as a whole.

"The four-day stroke play event will take place Aug. 20-23, at The Club at Chatham Hills, where 57 players will contend for the Indianapolis individual title and final spots in the League's individual season-long standings," said a memo from the league. "The team competition will count the scores of all four players on each team every day, culminating with one of the 13 teams being crowned the 2026 LIV Golf Team Champion."

Additionally, Golf.com is reporting that the LIV Golf league maintained a non-working tickets page for days because officials were worried about "avoiding additional media flags."



Lucas Herbert checks his book standing on the ninth hole during the second round of the LIV Golf New York tournament Aug. 7 at Trump National Bedminster. DENNIS SCHNEIDLER/IMAGN IMAGES

This is from a Golf.com social media post:

"LIV's head of ticketing and hospitality, Michael Drobnick, laid out a plan for limiting media attention around the cancellation of one of the league's biggest events.

"The ticketing page will remain live, but no inventory will be available," Drobnick wrote to ticket and hospitality staffers. "If a guest visits the page to view tickets, they will see a message that says, 'The tickets you were looking for are no longer available.' "

"After discussing with [LIV executives] Scott [O'Neil], Chris [Heck] and Ilana [Finley], we think this is the best path forward for now," Drobnick's message continued. "It allows us to keep the ticketing page live, hopefully avoiding additional media flags by removing it entirely, while also ensuring guests cannot proceed through the checkout process."

"Hopefully in the next 24-48 hours, we'll have the green light to officially make the announcement. At that point, we will remove the ticketing page entirely."

This all comes as the league is touting major investment on the horizon. On Aug. 5, CEO Scott O'Neil said that the league has reached an agreement with a "lead investor" and has garnered interest from "dozens" of other potential financial backers.

"LIV Golf has an agreement in place with a lead investor, signed by the investor and approved by the board, to anchor the transaction and play a key role in supporting the path forward for the league's next era, driven by and for the players," O'Neil said. "We're also seeing strong interest from more than a dozen additional parties to potentially serve as minority investors, creating a multi-partner model built for long-term stability and growth."

And not only is there a new major investor, according to O'Neil, but a deal has been formulated that will make LIV Golf's players equity holders in the league itself.

For context, LIV provided financial details of the league with IndyStar in April:

- From 2024 to 2025, LIV Golf grew more than 100% in revenue. In 2026, ticket sales were up 130% year over year.
- LIV sold more than 115,000 tickets for Adelaide and more than 100,000 in South Africa. Sponsorships are up 40% year over year.
- Through the first five events, the league was pacing $100 million ahead of last year's revenue.

Jeanie Buss opposes bid by family to sell LA stake

Lorenzo Reyes
USA TODAY

The new owners of the Los Angeles Lakers are consolidating their control over the franchise and amplifying their stake in the team.

The Buss family announced it has agreed to sell its remaining 17.8% stake in the franchise on Aug. 17 to new majority owners, businessman Joshua Kushner and former Disney CEO Robert Iger. ESPN was the first to report the news.

Jeanie Buss

"We have decided as a family to sell the remaining Buss Family Trust shares to the Bob Iger group as part of the ongoing transaction," the Buss family said Monday in a statement. "We love the Lakers, Laker fans and will continue to support Los Angeles; but it is time to use this opportunity to move on and exit gracefully while we still can."

But there could be a wrinkle in the family's plans to sell its shares.

In a letter through her lawyer at Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton obtained by USA TODAY Sports, Jeanie Buss is opposing the sale of the family's minority stake, claiming it would be a breach of the family's trust.

The letter, which was sent to lawyers representing Jeanie's siblings, argues that Jeanie remains the controlling owner of the family's stake – citing a 2017 order from the Los Angeles Superior Court – and that any attempt to override that "would constitute a breach of trust, breach of fiduciary duty and be in contempt of court."

The opposition from Jeanie complicates the sale of the family's shares and could ignite a legal battle between Jeanie and her siblings.

This announcement that the Buss family intends to sell its shares comes just days after Kushner and Iger stunned the NBA world by agreeing to a purchase agreement of the Lakers for a record $12.5 billion on Aug. 12. That happened 10 months after Los Angeles Dodgers co-owner and TWG Global CEO Mark Walter bought the team from the Buss Family.

The Busses had retained a minority position after the June 2025 sale to Walter. According to ESPN, the six children of owner Dr. Jerry Buss held a vote as part of the family trust to consider the sale of the remaining shares to Kushner and Iger's group. The deal required four of six votes.

Monday's decision from most of the Buss children could now end the family's memorable 47-year run with the franchise. Jerry Buss bought the Lakers in May 1979 for $67.5 million, in a deal that also included the NHL's Los Angeles Kings and the arena where both franchises played, the Great Western Forum in Inglewood, California.

Under the Buss family's direction, the Lakers ushered in the "Showtime" era and oversaw a stretch of consistent competitiveness. The Lakers won 11 championships during the family's reign as majority owners.

Under the Busses, the Lakers recorded just 10 seasons with a win percentage below .500 and missed the playoffs only nine times. In fact, Los Angeles clinched postseason berths in the first 14 years of Buss' ownership of the team. A number of franchise icons and eventual Hall of Fame players – names like Magic Johnson, Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant – starred with the Lakers under the Buss family.

With Monday's decision, Jeanie Buss can no longer serve as governor of the Lakers. When Walter first bought the majority stake of the franchise in June 2025, he had agreed to allow Jeanie, the daughter of Jerry, to serve as governor of the Lakers through the 2030 season. On Wednesday, Iger had told the California Post that he and Kushner had "every intention to honor" the agreement that Jeanie Buss had made with Walter to remain on as governor.

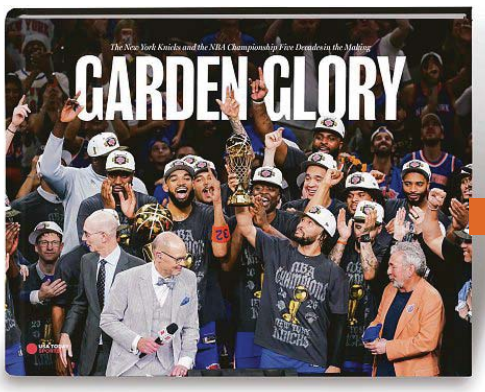
Yet, NBA rules mandate that a person must retain at least a 15% ownership stake in a franchise to act as governor.

It is unclear who will serve in that role moving forward. With their addition of the 17.8% stake that had belonged to the Buss family, the Kushner and Iger group will now control north of 82% of the franchise.

The sale will still need approval from the NBA's board of governors.

LAST CHANCE TO
SAVE

THE NEW YORK KNICKS' CHAMPIONSHIP IN A HARDCOVER COLLECTOR'S BOOK



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The Knicks are champions! New York hadn't won an NBA title since 1973. Fifty-three years of heartbreak — from Ewing's near-miss in '94 to the '99 Finals run that fell short — tested every fan who ever packed Madison Square Garden. *That wait is over!*

Jalen Brunson and company ripped through the 2026 playoffs, reaching the NBA Finals with 11 consecutive victories that closed out the Hawks, included sweeps of the 76ers and Cavaliers. Then the Knicks polished off Victor Wembanyama and San Antonio in five games to hoist the Larry O'Brien Trophy.

"Garden Glory" is a 160-page hardcover book covering this entire season, from a 53-win regular season through the Finals showdown with San Antonio. The photos, the stories, the moments that made it real. Published by USA TODAY Sports. Printed on premium matte stock. Reserve your copy today.

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USA TODAY SPORTS

WNBA POWER RANKINGS

Early peek at teams' top '27 free agent

Mitchell Northam
USA TODAY

The Los Angeles Sparks' Nneka Ogwumike, left, works around Napheesa Collier of the Minnesota Lynx during the first half Aug. 6 at Target Center in Minneapolis. Both are set to become free agents at season's end. MATT KROHN/GETTY IMAGES

There's still more than a month left in the 2026 regular season for the WNBA, but it's never too early to start thinking about next year.

Organizations like the Seattle Storm and Connecticut Sun – which will move to Houston in 2027 – are likely thinking about the future as they have been eliminated from the playoffs. Meanwhile, the Golden State Valkyries, Minnesota Lynx and Las Vegas Aces have already clinched their spots in the postseason.

The WNBA's new collective bargaining agreement brought bigger contracts to the league, with salaries topping $1 million for the first time ever. While some players like A'ja Wilson and Aliyah Boston signed long-term deals this offseason, other players signed one-year deals and will once again be looking for big paydays. With a longer offseason – not a truncated one like this past year due to CBA negotiations – that might make time for free agent bidding wars.

Each team has at least one player they'd like to lock up and keep on their team for the 2027 season.

Here's each team's best pending free agent as we take a peek at the upcoming offseason. (Records and stats through Aug. 17.)

1. Minnesota Lynx (29-7)

Previous rank: 1 (–)

Best pending free agent: Napheesa Collier

After signing a one-year deal worth $1.4 million this year to remain with the Lynx while she rehabbed from ankle surgery, Napheesa Collier will be one of the most coveted unrestricted free agents on the market this offseason. The former UConn forward will turn 30 next month and has spent all eight years of her career with Minnesota where she's been a five-time All-Star, four-time All-WNBA selection and the 2024 Defensive Player of the Year. If the Lynx can keep Collier and Rookie of the Year front-runner Olivia Miles together for the next few seasons, they'll continue to be in the championship mix.

2. Golden State Valkyries (25-9)

Previous rank: 2 (–)

Best pending free agent: Kayla Thornton

The UTEP product will turn 34 in October, but she's played some of the best ball of her career in her two seasons with Golden State. Kayla Thornton made her first WNBA All-Star team last season and is second in minutes played and rebounds for the Valkyries this season. The 6-foot-1 forward plays a key role for what is widely viewed as the best defensive unit in the WNBA. While Golden State could find a replacement-level player, there's no doubt Thornton has been crucial to their success.

3. Indiana Fever (23-12)

Previous rank: 5 (+2)

Best pending free agent: Kelsey Mitchell

Like Napheesa Collier, Kelsey Mitchell signed a one-year deal this offseason worth $1.4 million to remain with the Fever. Of the Fever's Big 3, she's the only one at risk of leaving this offseason with Caitlin Clark still on her rookie deal and Aliyah Boston locked up through 2029. A four-time All-Star, Mitchell made her first All-WNBA team last season and seems to be in the prime of her career. The Ohio State product is scoring a career-high 24.2 points per game while shooting a career-best 50.3% from the floor and 43.7% from 3-point land. It seems to be in the Fever's best interests to keep her, Clark and Boston together for as long as possible.

4. Las Vegas Aces (24-12)

Previous rank: 4 (–)

Best pending free agent: Jackie Young

With A'ja Wilson, Chelsea Gray and Jewell Loyd under contract through 2028, the focus of the Aces' offseason will likely be centered around a deal for Jackie Young, who has been a critical component to three championship-winning teams since she entered the WNBA in 2019. A five-time All-Star and two-time All-WNBA selection, Young is averaging a career-high 18.4 points and 6.7 assists per game this season.

5. Atlanta Dream (21-13)

Previous rank: 6 (+1)

Best pending free agent: Sika Kone

The Dream's core of starters and key supporting players are under contract heading into next season. Allisha Gray, Rhyne Howard, Brionna Jones and Naz Hillmon are locked down through 2028, while Angel Reese and Jordin Canada have one year left on their deals beyond this season. Young players like Te-Hina Paopao, Madina Okot and Isobel Borlase are under contract for multiple years. That leaves Sika Kone who has played an average of 5.4 minutes per game across 28 contests for the Dream this season. She's not a player Atlanta is going to break the bank to keep.

6. New York Liberty (22-14)

Previous rank: 7 (+1)

Best pending free agent: Pauline Astier

In her first WNBA season at the age of 24, Pauline Astier has risen into a starting role with the Liberty and seems to be a strong fit for coach Chris DeMarco's system and style of play. A guard from France, Astier is averaging 9.4 points, 2.4 rebounds and 3.5 assists per game and is the Liberty's top shooter, averaging 55.4% from the floor. With Sabrina Ionescu, Breanna Stewart and Jonquel Jones signed on through 2028 and Leonie Fiebich on her rookie deal, Astier is the best player who could leave New York via free agency. She is a restricted free agent, so the Liberty will have the opportunity to match any offer she gets.

7. Washington Mystics (20-14)

Previous rank: 3 (-4)

Best pending free agent: Betnijah Laney-Hamilton

Similar to the Dream, the Mystics' top players – Sonia Citron, Shakira Austin, Kiki Iriafen, Michaela Onyenwere and Georgia Amoore – are under contract beyond the 2026 season. The best player on the Mystics roster not signed on for next season is the one they acquired from the New York Liberty off waivers, Betnijah Laney-Hamilton. How she helps the team and fits into the locker room during the final stretch of this season will likely determine how important she is to the Mystics' offseason plans.

8. Dallas Wings (20-16)

Previous rank: 9 (+1)

Best pending free agent: Awak Kuier

In her fourth WNBA season, Awak Kuier seems to be settling into a key role for the Wings under coach Jose Fernandez. She has started in 18 of the 32 games she's appeared in, is shooting a career-best 48.9% from the floor and leads the team in blocks with 1.2 per game. She's a restricted free agent, so Dallas will have the opportunity to match an offer from another team.

9. Portland Fire (15-20)

Previous rank: 10 (+1)

Best pending free agent: Emily Engstler

On her fourth WNBA team in five seasons, the Louisville product is having a breakout year for the Fire and has established herself as someone who can have a long career in this league as a versatile defender, strong rebounder and serviceable scorer. A lanky 6-foot-1 wing, Emily Engstler ranks fourth in the league in blocks with 49 and sixth in steal percentage. She has started all 35 games for the Fire and is averaging 9.1 points, 5.3 rebounds and 2.1 assists per game – all career highs. Engstler is a restricted free agent, so the Fire will have the chance to match any offer.

10. Phoenix Mercury (13-23)

Previous rank: 13 (+3)

Best pending free agent: Kelsey Plum

Kelsey Plum signed a one-year deal this year worth just under $1 million to remain with the Sparks. Amid a disappointing season for the franchise and with Plum's free agency pending, they shipped her off to the Mercury before the trade deadline. If Plum doesn't ink a long-term deal to remain in Phoenix, she'll be a highly coveted free agent. The five-time All-Star and two-time champion is averaging a career-high 22.3 points per game this season at the age of 31 and remains one of the best 3-point shooters in the league.

11. Chicago Sky (13-22)

Previous rank: 9 (-)

Best pending free agent: DiJonai Carrington

The WNBA's 2024 Most Improved Player has played with four teams in the past three seasons and could be wearing a different jersey yet again next season if she decides to hit the open market instead of remaining with Chicago. DiJonai Carrington remains a strong defender and is shooting a career-best 38.9% from 3-point land this season. There will be teams interested in her services.

12. Los Angeles Sparks (12-22)

Previous rank: 11 (-1)

Best pending free agent: Nneka Ogwumike

The former league MVP's second go-round with the Sparks has not gone as planned. Nneka Ogwumike left the Seattle Storm in free agency and signed a one-year deal worth $950,000 to return to Los Angeles where she won a championship and enjoyed the best seasons of her career. The president of the WNBPA will be 37 next year, but she's playing at a high level. Ogwumike was an All-Star this season for the 11th time in her career and is averaging 16.8 points, 8.8 rebounds and 3.1 assists per game while shooting 50.8% from the floor and 39.7% from behind the arc.

13. Toronto Tempo (10-23)

Previous rank: 14 (+1)

Best pending free agent: Nyara Sabally

The 6-foot-5 forward has battled injuries this season but has started in 20 of the 24 games she's played in for the Tempo and is averaging 12.3 points and 5.3 rebounds per game while shooting 39.2% from 3 – all of which are career bests.

A restricted free agent, the Tempo will be able to match any offer Nyara Sabally gets, and coach Sandy Brondello would probably like to keep her around as she continues to establish her culture in Toronto. Sabally won a championship playing for Brondello in New York.

14. Connecticut Sun (8-25)

Previous rank: 12 (-2)

Best pending free agent: Brittney Griner

Brittney Griner signed a one-year deal to join the Sun this year, but all signs point to her trying to remain with the franchise as they move to Houston next season.

Griner is a Houston native and it might be good for the franchise to arrive with a well-known marquee player like Griner – a nine-time All-Star, former champion and the WNBA's all-time leader in blocks. While battling injuries approaching her 36th birthday, Griner is the Sun's leading scorer this season.

15. Seattle Storm (7-30)

Previous rank: 15 (–)

Best pending free agent: Jade Melbourne

Despite Seattle's struggles this season, Jade Melbourne has found a role alongside Natisha Hiedeman in the backcourt. She has started in 28 of 36 games and is averaging 9.3 points, 2.1 rebounds and 3.9 assists per game. Seattle could probably find replacement level talent – or even an upgrade at her position with one of the guards mentioned above – but she is a restricted free agent if they want to keep her around.

LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES

Twenty teams set to take center stage

Sherlon Christie
USA TODAY

Brody Miller (17) of Southeast Region celebrates with teammates after hitting a home run against Mountain Region in the second inning Aug. 21, 2025, at Howard J. Lamade Stadium. KYLE ROSS/IMAGN IMAGES

The bracket for Williamsport is complete.

The 2026 Little League World Series is loaded with powerhouse teams and standout players ready for the spotlight.

From South Korea's dominant West Seoul squad to Canada's Little Mountain team, the International bracket is filled with contenders for the title. Add in Ohio, Alabama, Washington, Massachusetts, Texas, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Nevada, New Jersey and California representing the United States, and the stage is set for unforgettable drama in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Every regional winner fought through pressure-packed championship games just to earn this opportunity to end the summer as the Little League World Series champion.

Now that the 2026 LLWS bracket is set, the countdown is officially on until we have the next Little League World Series champion.

Here's everything to know about the 20 teams in contention for this year's LLWS title.

US BRACKET TEAMS

Great Lakes Region Champion

West Side Little League, based in Hamilton, Ohio, is one of the more decorated Little League teams arriving in Williamsport this year. The program has dominated Ohio competition for years and recently won its 23rd state Little League title this summer with a 4-3 win over Canfield Little League. West Side's Caiden Trent had the game-winning, walk-off, two-run double in the bottom of the sixth to clinch the state title. You could call West Side LL the premier youth baseball program in Ohio, and the team has the résumé to back it up. At this year's Little League Midwest Region, West Side went 4-0 and had two shutouts along the way to the regional title. This year will be West Side's sixth LLWS appearance after the squad made previous trips in 1991, 1993, 2007, 2010 and 2021. Despite a ton of success before reaching Williamsport, West Side has an 8-9 record in its five previous LLWS appearances. If West Side can replicate its pre-Williamsport success while in Pennsylvania, it would be the first Ohio team to ever win the Little League World Series.

The Hamilton West Side Little League team won its 23rd state championship and punched its ticket to return for a second year to the 2026 Little League World Series. PROVIDED BY TONY GIORDULLO

Metro Region Champion

It's been a historic summer for Bayonne Central Little League (Bayonne, New Jersey). The Hudson County team from the north New Jersey area is going to Williamsport for the first time in the league's history. According to the Record of North Jersey, Bayonne Central LL is the 21st New Jersey charter across 15 different Little League charters in the Garden State to ever reach the global youth baseball tournament. Toms River East Little League, formerly Toms River East American Little League, was the last New Jersey team to go to Williamsport, in 2021. Bayonne Central defeated Darien Little League from Connecticut, 8-6, in the Metro Region Championship game to earn its spot in Williamsport. As far as LLWS championships, New Jersey has four titles already thanks to Hammonton Little League (1949), Toms River East Little League (1998), Wayne Little League (1970) and Lakewood Little League (1975). Will Bayonne Central continue this legacy with the state's fifth?

Mid-Atlantic Region Champion

East Side Little League, of West Chester, Pennsylvania, is making its first Little League World Series appearance but has the pitching and plate prowess to make a deep run in the tournament. East Side stormed through the Mid-Atlantic Region with three consecutive wins, outscoring its opponents 21-2. Pitchers Cole Warner and Ryan Donnelly combined for a 3-1 tournament championship victory against Naamans Little League of Wilmington, Delaware. With Warner also flashing power at the plate, East Side's offense has shown it has plenty of pop to support its strong starting rotation. West Chester is a roughly three-hour drive from Williamsport, so expect this team to have a raucous following as they move through play.

Midwest Region Champion

Iowa's Davenport Northwest Little League can brag about having one of the more dramatic ways to clinch a Little League World Series ticket. With Iowa trailing 6-4 entering the bottom of the seventh inning, Kannon Kane had a two-run single to tie the game. Teammate Anthony Johnson Jr., who had an incredible relief effort, would eventually come home from third on a wild pitch to beat an attempted tag for a 7-6 win. The star of the game was Iowa's Cooper Thissen, who had an impressive pitching line: 4 ⅔ innings pitched, one hit, one earned run, four walks and 13 strikeouts. He will be a player to watch in Williamsport for both his arm and his bat. And you have to tip your cap to Johnson for hanging in there on the mound and coming up with the play of the game with his feet. Iowa will send a team to Williamsport for the 16th time and the state is still looking for its first Little League World Series championship.

Mountain Region Champion

Paseo Verde Little League from Henderson, Nevada, will be in Williamsport for the second time in three years after making it in 2024. That year, Paseo Verde LL went 2-2 in World Series play. This year, Paseo Verde LL went 3-0 in the Mountain Region Tournament and defeated Billings Big Sky Little League 9-2 in the championship game to punch its ticket to the Little League World Series. Since the creation of the Mountain Region Tournament in 2022 when Little League International expanded the World Series field from 16 to 20 teams, Nevada teams have dominated the bracket every year except 2022. Before that structural change, Nevada teams competed in the West Region bracket. Does Nevada have a Little League World Series champion? No. The state is still looking for title No. 1 but came close in 2025. In that year, Summerlin South Little League from Las Vegas was the U.S. Champion after being Connecticut 8-2 but finished as the overall Little League World Series runner-up after losing 7-0 to Chinese Taipei.

New England Region Champion

Bridgewater Joe Lazaro Little League (Bridgewater, Massachusetts) is having a summer to remember as the team earned the right to play in Williamsport for the first time in the league's 74-year history. Bridgewater Joe Lazaro LL had a dominant showing in the New England Championship game as ace Dominik Mombeleur was tough on the mound and also clutch with the bat in an 8-0 win over Maine's Gray New Gloucester Little League. Mombeleur went five innings, struck out 14 and allowed only two hits and two walks. He'll be a name to remember for when Massachusetts plays its first game in Williamsport. According to the Enterprise of Brockton, Massachusetts, the Massachusetts-based squad has been on quite a roll since the state tournament by winning two state titles in the last three years and outscoring teams 26-1 in regional tournament play. Bridgewater Joe Lazaro will be the 13th Massachusetts team to play in Williamsport and the state is still seeking its first Little League World Series title

Northwest Region Champion

The All-Stars from SoundView Little League (Tacoma, Washington) will enjoy the atmosphere of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, for the very first time when the team arrives for the Little League World Series. SoundView went 3-1 in the Northwest Region Tournament and became the sixth straight team from Washington to win the Northwest Region Tournament. Overall, SoundView LL will be the 18th team from Washington to qualify for the LLWS and the squad is aiming to bring another LLWS championship back to the state. Currently, the state of Washington has only one LLWS title and that's from Kirkland National Little League in 1982.

Southeast Region Champion

Teams from Phenix City, Alabama, haven't been to the Little League World Series often. In fact, the city is making only its second-ever appearance in Williamsport after Phenix City Youth Baseball Little League won the 2026 Little League Southeast Region Tournament, 4-0, over Nolensville Little League from Nolensville, Tennessee, on Aug. 11. If you have a good memory of a team from Phenix City making some noise in the LLWS before, then you're probably thinking of Phenix City National Little League in 1999 that won the U.S. Championship but lost the 1999 Little League World Series championship game to Japan. It is the same Little League team – now under a new name. Speaking of names, you probably remember a few from that 1999 Phenix City National Little League team like Colby and Cory Rasmus, who went on to play in Major League Baseball. Cory's daughter Kinsley Rasmus is a standout pitcher for the 2026 Phenix City Youth Baseball Little League team and a name to watch in Williamsport.

Southwest Region Champion

Aug. 10, 2026, is a day that Boerne Little League (Boerne, Texas) will not forgot. When the day started, Boerne Little League was playing in an elimination game of the Southwest Region Tournament. A little bit before game time, that scenario changed dramatically as Tulsa National Little League, which had already qualified for the Southwest Region championship game, was removed from the Southwest Region Tournament and its previous game was ruled a forfeit. With that ruling from Little League, Boerne LL and Ascension Parish Little League were elevated to a one-game championship on Aug. 10. Boerne LL won that aforementioned game over Ascension Parish LL 4-1 to claim this year's Southwest Region championship. Now, Boerne will head to Williamsport for the second time in three years after making its last appearance in 2024. In that previous visit to the LLWS, Boerne was the U.S. bracket runner-up and finished with an overall 3-2 record. While Boerne LL has never won the LLWS title, the state of Texas has two LLWS winners (Houston National Little League in 1950, Houston Westbury American Little League in 1966).

West Region Champion

Sweetwater Valley Little League (Bonita, California) is making its second trip to Williamsport after clinching this year's West Region title. In the regional championship game, Sweetwater Valley LL defeated Kawaihau Community Little League from Kapaa, Hawaii, 11-3, to clinch the final spot in the 2026 Little League World Series field. In Sweetwater Valley LL's first trip to Williamsport in 2015, the team advanced to the U.S. semifinals and finished tournament play with a 3-2 record that year. With the regional championship victory, Sweetwater Valley becomes the 51st team from California to qualify for the LLWS. Does California have a LLWS title? Yes. The state has the most for U.S. teams with eight championships, the last coming in 2023 when El Segundo Little League defeated Pabao Little League from Willemstad, Curaçao, 6-5, on a dramatic walk-off home run in the sixth inning.

INTERNATIONAL BRACKET TEAMS

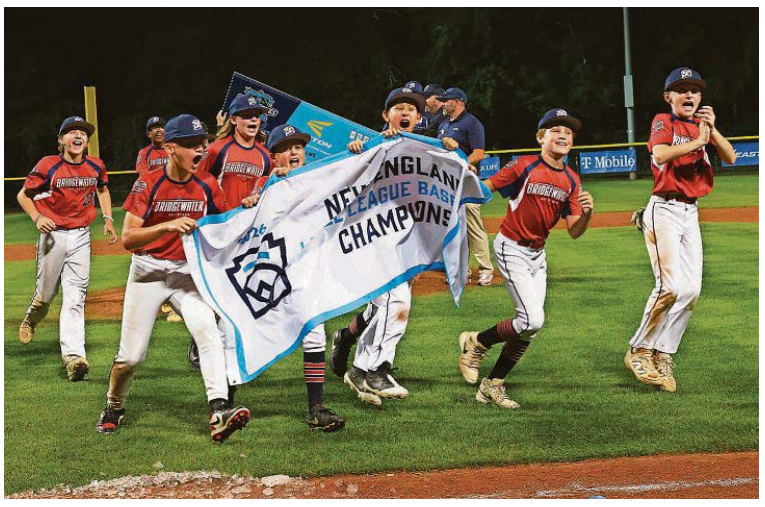
Asia-Pacific Region Champion

West Seoul (B) Little League (Seoul, South Korea) started its charter in 2019 and the program will be making its second trip to the LLWS this year. Its first appearance came in 2017. In the Asia-Pacific Regional Tournament, West Seoul (B) LL cruised to a 6-0 record to earn its spot in Williamsport. According to Little League, this win marks the eighth time a team from South Korea will make the trip to Williamsport, its first appearance dating back to 1984 and last trip coming in 2019. West Seoul (B) Little League is aiming for the fourth LLWS title for a team from South Korea. Previously, National Little League – Seoul in 1984, 1985 and Seoul Little League 2014) have the country's three other LLWS titles.

Australia Region Champion

Ryde Little League (Sydney, New South Wales) will finally experience the aura of the Little League World Series this year after the program won the Australia Regional Tournament in 2021 but couldn't travel to the United States as that year's LLWS featured only teams from the United States due to the pandemic restrictions at the time, according to Little League. So, the 2026 adventure to the Pennsylvania mecca of youth baseball will be the team's first official trip to the LLWS and the country's 12th overall appearance. Here are some notable facts about Australia's participation in the LLWS: Perth Metro Central LL (Perth) became the first Australian team

Continued on next page



Bridgewater players earned the New England championship banner Aug. 13.
MARC VASCONCELLOS/THE ENTERPRISE

Continued from previous page

to ever qualify for the Little League World Series in 2013. Also, 12 teams, including this year's entry (Ryde LL) have qualified for the LLWS but Australia, prior to the 2026 tournament, has never won the Little League World Series.

Canada Region Champion

Little Mountain Little League (Vancouver, British Columbia) is making back-to-back appearances in the LLWS as the Canada Region representative. In fact, Little Mountain LL will visit Williamsport for the third time in five years after also earning the berth in 2022. The history of the league's participation in the LLWS goes all the way back to 1953 before Canada got a direct entry in the LLWS field of teams. The league's modern era of success also includes a trip to the international tournament in 2010. Since 2010, Little Mountain LL has gone 4-6 in LLWS games. Also, a team from Canada has never won the Little League World Series.

Caribbean Region Champion

Los Nacionales Little League (Santiago, Dominican Republic) punched its ticket to the 2026 Little League World Series after defeating Aruba North Little League 5-3 to capture the Caribbean Region championship. Los Nacionales finished the tournament with a 7-1 record, earning the league's first-ever trip to Williamsport and the Dominican Republic's 10th appearance since 1978, according to Little League. The nation's best finish came with a runner-up showing in 1983.

Curaçao Region Champion

2026 is an important year for the country of Curaçao and especially for the Pariba Little League (Willemstad, Curaçao). According to Little League, "this year marks the first time a team from Curaçao earns direct entry to the International Bracket of the LLBWS." Pariba LL earned its fifth berth to the LLWS and the country's 16th appearance for the international tournament.

When a Curaçao team makes the LLWS, it usually performs very well as the country has four runner-up finishes and one LLWS title, which came in 2004 via Pabao Little League (Willemstad, Curaçao).

Europe & Africa Region Champion

South Czech Republic Little League has become a regular participant in the Little League World Series and the league is making its fourth consecutive trip to Williamsport under its current name. However, this will be the league's and also the country's sixth overall appearance as the aforementioned charter was previously called South Moravia Little League from Brno, Czechia, when it qualified for the Little League World Series in 2013 and 2014. Despite all the regional success of South Czech Republic Little League, the charter has a victory in only one game during its history at the Little League World Series.

Japan Region Champion

Tokyo's Joto Little League is heading back to Williamsport for this year's event after it amassed a 2-2 LLWS debut record in 2025. Joto LL clinched its spot after defeating Chiba Little League in the Japan Region Tournament title game. Joto LL was undefeated with a 4-0 record in the regional bracket to secure its second consecutive trip to Williamsport and the 35th total entry for Japan. Japan ranks third for most LLWS appearances at 35, trailing Canada (65) and Mexico (37). Since its first bid in 1962, Japan has set many individual and team milestones, including throwing one of five perfect games (1976) in LLWS history. Gaining direct entry since 2007, Japan has reached the championship game 16 times, capturing 11 titles overall, with the most recent title coming in 2017 thanks to Tokyo Kitasuna Little League.

Latin America Region Champion

Ministerio Sobre Las Alas Del Aguila Little League (Leon, Nicaragua) will be the Latin America representative in this year's Little League World Series. Ministerio Sobre Las Alas Del Aguila LL went 7-0 in the regional tournament and earned "the league's first trip to Williamsport and only the fourth trip for the country (1968, 1970, 2022)," according to Little League.

Mexico Region Champion

Municipal de Tijuana Little League (Tijuana, Mexico) earned its third berth to the Little League World Series with its previous two appearances coming in 2013 and 2023. Mexico's rich Little League tradition continues with its 38th LLBWS appearance since 1957, the second most by any international participant after Canada, according to Little League.

Also, Mexico has very impressive LLWS stats: 81-63 overall record, three LLWS titles (1957, 1958 and 1997), four runner-up finishes and three third-place finishes. Another notable fact about Mexico's participation in the LLWS, it was the first international team to ever win the LLWS title back in 1957.

Panama Region Champion

David Doleguita Little League (Chiriquí, Panamá) became the first team to qualify for the 2026 Little League World Series this year. David Doleguita LL amassed an 11-3 record after winning a three-game championship series to earn its spot in Williamsport. According to Little League, "This will be the second time David Doleguita LL appears in the LLBWS, dating back to the league's first appearance in 1993 when it finished as runner-up to the champion Long Beach (Calif.) Little League." Also, a team from Panama will be in the LLWS for the 14th time since the country secured its first berth in 1984.

Elite arms of note for all 10 USA squads

Sherlon Christie
USA TODAY

Who will be the next Little League World Series pitching legend?

The brightest young arms in youth baseball are in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, for another Little League World Series. Every year, a handful of pitchers transform from hometown heroes into national sensations. The 2026 tournament could be no different.

From flame-throwing aces to pinpoint control artists, these standout pitchers have already captured attention across regional tournaments. Now they'll take center stage on ESPN with millions watching.

Who will throw the biggest game? Who will deliver a clutch performance under pressure? And which pitcher will become the breakout star everyone is talking about by championship weekend?

As the Little League World Series begins, all eyes are on the mound. One dominant outing can change everything.

Great Lakes Region (West Side Little League, Ohio)

Boone Treadway

• **Region Stats:** Treadway pitched a masterful, one-hit complete-game shutout with nine strikeouts on a highly efficient 62 pitches in the regional championship game against Kentucky. He also struck out six batters while carrying a no-hitter into the third inning during an earlier 11-0 shutout against Indiana on Aug. 9.

Metro Region (Bayonne Central Little League, New Jersey)

Mason Rincon

• **Region Stats:** Rincon threw 3 ⅔ scoreless innings early in the bracket with five strikeouts while allowing just one hit against Connecticut (Aug. 8) and New York (Aug. 10) combined. In the Metro championship game against Connecticut, he entered late to pitch 2 ⅓ scoreless innings of relief without giving up a hit and striking out six straight batters (nine total strikeouts in the game) to slam the door on an 8-6 comeback win.

Mid-Atlantic Region (East Side Little League, Pennsylvania)

Cole Warner

• **Region Stats:** Warner started the Mid-Atlantic championship game against Delaware, pitching five dominant innings while yielding one run and racking up eight strikeouts to secure a 3-1 victory.

Midwest Region (Davenport Northwest Little League, Iowa)

Cooper Thissen

• **Region Stats:** Davenport Northwest Little League won a 7-6 extra-inning thriller in the final against Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, mainly because of Thissen. He was the star of the game and had an impressive pitching line: 4 ⅔ IP, 1 H, 1 R, 0 ER, 4 BB, 13 K. He will be a player to watch in Williamsport for both his arm and bat.

Mountain Region (Paseo Verde Little League, Nevada)

Owen Guzman

• **Region Stats:** Guzman shined in the Mountain Region championship game against Montana. He started and went five innings, gave up two hits, four walks but struck out 10 as Paseo Verde Little League cruised to a 9-2 win.

New England Region (Bridgewater Joe Lazaro Little League, Massachusetts)

Dominik 'The Dominator' Mombeleur

• **Region Stats:** Mombeleur had an elite regional tournament run, recording a total of 26 strikeouts across 9 ⅓ innings pitched. In the New England championship game, he tossed five scoreless innings, scattered only two hits and two walks while striking out 14 batters.

Northwest Region (SoundView Little League, Washington)

Frankie McCabe

• **Region Stats:** McCabe had two starts in the Northwest Region tournament, the team's first and last game, and compiled solid stats: 8 ⅓ IP, 8 H, 3 ER, 6 BB, 17 K. McCabe ended his outing with two more strikeouts to put him at 10 on the day. McCabe reached the 85-pitch limit during the team's region championship game and left to a standing ovation from the crowd in San Bernardino, California.

Southeast Region (Phenix City Youth Baseball Little League, Alabama)

Kinley Rasmus

• **Region Stats:** Rasmus had a complete game shutout in a 4-0 victory over Tennessee in the Southeast Region championship game. Rasmus had a sparkling final pitching line: 6 IP, 3 H, 0 ER, 0 BB, 8 K. She kept the Tennessee batters off balance with her fastball and curveball, which she attributed to her dad, Cory Rasmus, in a postgame interview on ESPN. She is also an excellent hitter based on her .750 batting average and six hits during the region tournament.

Southwest Region (Boerne Little League, Texas)

Boone Blalock

• **Region Stats:** Blalock had one of the best pitching performances for Boerne during the Southwest Region Tournament. On Aug. 9, he started and went 4 ⅓ innings with 11 strikeouts while only giving up five hits, two earned runs and two walks. Overall, he had two appearances during the region tournament and finished with 6 ⅔ innings, 5 H, 2 ER, 3 W and 14 K.

West Region (Sweetwater Valley Little League, California)

Isaac Ramirez Aguirre

• **Region Stats:** Ramirez Aguirre delivered arguably the most dominant individual pitching performance of the entire West Region tournament. On Aug. 11, he hurled a masterful, complete-game one-hit shutout with five strikeouts and only two walks in a 6-0 victory over Hawaii. In the rematch in the West Region championship game, Ramirez Aguirre went 2-for-4 with four RBIs, two runs scored and a grand slam that helped Sweetwater Valley clinch its ticket to Williamsport with an 11-3 win over Hawaii on Aug. 14.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

AscendRural, a program of Sourcewell — a State of Minnesota local government unit and service cooperative — is requesting proposals for the AscendRural Innovation Challenge: Bridging Distance to Rural Care & Services, to result in a procurement solution for use by Sourcewell Participating Entities.

This solicitation seeks innovative technology-enabled solutions that reduce the impact of distance on rural communities' access to healthcare, services, and essential goods. Proposals must address one or more of five problem areas: transportation access and coordination; local access to primary, specialty, and oral care; managing chronic conditions; last-mile delivery of essentials; and strengthening the business of rural access. Sourcewell Participating Entities include thousands of governmental, higher education, K-12 education, nonprofit, tribal government, and other public agencies located in the United States.

A full copy of the Request for Proposals can be found on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal https://proportal.sourcewell-mn.gov.

Only proposals submitted through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal will be considered.

Proposals are due no later than October 6, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. Central Time, and late proposals will not be considered.

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FOR THE RECORD

All times ET

MLB

American League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	75	49	.605	–
N.Y. Yankees	69	55	.556	6
Boston	67	58	.536	8½
Baltimore	61	64	.488	14½
Toronto	61	65	.484	15

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chi. White Sox	65	59	.524	–
Detroit	61	64	.488	4½
Minnesota	61	65	.484	5
Cleveland	60	65	.480	5½
Kansas City	52	74	.413	14

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	63	62	.504	–
Texas	61	64	.488	2
Seattle	59	66	.472	4
Athletics	49	76	.392	14
L.A. Angels	49	76	.392	14

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	74	51	.592	–
Philadelphia	68	58	.540	6½
Miami	64	62	.508	10½
Washington	60	66	.476	14½
N.Y. Mets	57	69	.452	17½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	77	48	.616	–
Chicago Cubs	73	53	.579	4½
St. Louis	64	62	.508	13½
Pittsburgh	61	66	.480	17
Cincinnati	60	65	.480	17

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Dodgers	75	51	.595	–
San Diego	67	59	.532	8
Arizona	66	60	.524	9
San Francisco	51	73	.411	23
Colorado	50	75	.400	24½

Monday's Scores

St. Louis 2, Cincinnati 1
Tampa Bay 7, Baltimore 6
Cincinnati 6, St. Louis 5
Philadelphia 6, Miami 5
Detroit 8, Pittsburgh 5
Boston 11, Arizona 1
N.Y. Mets 2, San Diego 1
Minnesota 4, Atlanta 2
Kansas City 9, Athletics 5
Chicago Cubs 7, Chi. White Sox 5
L.A. Dodgers 11, Colorado 5

Tuesday's Games

N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore
St. Louis at Cincinnati
Toronto at Tampa Bay
San Francisco at Cleveland
Miami at Philadelphia
Detroit at Pittsburgh
Arizona at Boston
San Diego at N.Y. Mets
Atlanta at Minnesota
Athletics at Kansas City
Seattle at Milwaukee
Washington at Texas
Chi. White Sox at Chicago Cubs
L.A. Angels at Houston
L.A. Dodgers at Colorado

Wednesday's Games

Detroit at Pittsburgh, 12:35 p.m.
San Diego at N.Y. Mets, 1:10 p.m.
Atlanta at Minnesota, 1:40 p.m.
Chi. White Sox at Chicago Cubs, 2:20 p.m.
Arizona at Boston, 4:10 p.m.
Miami at Philadelphia, 6:05 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore, 6:35 p.m.
St. Louis at Cincinnati, 6:40 p.m.
Toronto at Tampa Bay, 6:40 p.m.
San Francisco at Cleveland, 6:40 p.m.
Athletics at Kansas City, 7:40 p.m.
Seattle at Milwaukee, 7:40 p.m.
Washington at Texas, 8:05 p.m.
L.A. Angels at Houston, 8:10 p.m.
L.A. Dodgers at Colorado, 8:40 p.m.

Thursday's Games

St. Louis at Cincinnati, 12:40 p.m.
Toronto at Tampa Bay, 1:10 p.m.
San Francisco at Cleveland, 1:10 p.m.
Athletics at Kansas City, 2:10 p.m.
Seattle at Milwaukee, 2:10 p.m.
Atlanta at Chi. White Sox, 2:10 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore, 6:35 p.m.
Washington at Texas, 8:05 p.m.
L.A. Angels at Houston, 8:10 p.m.

Friday's Games

Atlanta at Milwaukee, 4:10 p.m.
St. Louis at Philadelphia, 6:40 p.m.
Toronto at N.Y. Yankees, 7:05 p.m.
San Francisco at Boston, 7:10 p.m.
Washington at Miami, 7:10 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Baltimore, 7:15 p.m.
N.Y. Mets at Chi. White Sox, 7:40 p.m.
Athletics at Houston, 8:10 p.m.
Detroit at Kansas City, 8:10 p.m.
L.A. Angels at Texas, 8:15 p.m.
Cleveland at Colorado, 8:40 p.m.
Cincinnati at Arizona, 9:40 p.m.
Minnesota at San Diego, 9:40 p.m.
Chicago Cubs at Seattle, 10:10 p.m.
Pittsburgh at L.A. Dodgers, 10:10 p.m.

WNBA

Eastern Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
Indiana	23	12	.657	–
Atlanta	21	13	.618	1½
N.Y. Liberty	22	14	.611	1½
Washington	20	14	.588	2½
Chicago Sky	13	22	.371	10
Toronto	10	23	.303	12
Connecticut	8	25	.242	14

Western Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	29	7	.806	–
Golden State	25	9	.735	3
Las Vegas	24	12	.667	5
Dallas	20	16	.556	9
Portland	15	20	.429	13½
Phoenix	13	23	.361	16
L.A. Sparks	12	22	.353	16
Seattle	7	30	.189	22½

Monday's Score

Golden State 78, Dallas 70

Tuesday's Games

L.A. Sparks vs Connecticut at Boston
Indiana vs Toronto at Toronto
N.Y. Liberty at Chicago Sky
Atlanta at Las Vegas

Wednesday's Games

Toronto at Washington, 7:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Golden State, 10 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Indiana vs Dallas at Dallas, 8 p.m.
Connecticut at Las Vegas, 10 p.m.
Atlanta at L.A. Sparks, 10 p.m.

Friday's Games

Minnesota at Washington, 7:30 p.m.
Golden State at Chicago Sky, 7:30 p.m.
Portland vs Toronto at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

CFL

EAST DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	PF	PA
Montreal	8	1	.889	321	247
Toronto	4	5	.444	265	291
Hamilton	4	6	.400	237	280
Ottawa	0	9	.000	207	322

WEST DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	PF	PA
Edmonton	7	3	.700	259	248
Saskatchewan	6	3	.666	274	215
Winnipeg	5	4	.555	204	243
BC	4	5	.444	214	225
Calgary	4	6	.400	352	297

Thursday's Game

Ottawa vs. Montreal, 7:30 p.m.

Friday's Game

Winnipeg vs. Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.

Saturday's Game

Hamilton vs. Toronto, 7 p.m.

Sunday's Game

Saskatchewan vs. BC, 7 p.m.

NFL

Preseason Week 2

Thursday's Games

Las Vegas at Houston, 8 p.m.
San Francisco at L.A. Chargers, 10 p.m.

Friday's Games

N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Jacksonville, 7:30 p.m.
Green Bay at Denver, 9 p.m.

Saturday's Games

Washington at Detroit, noon
Buffalo at Cleveland, 1 p.m.
Baltimore at Minnesota, 1 p.m.
Atlanta at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Miami, 4 p.m.
New Orleans at L.A. Rams, 4 p.m.
Philadelphia at New England, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Cincinnati, 7 p.m.
Kansas City at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Dallas at Arizona, 10 p.m.

Sunday's Game

Seattle at Tennessee, 8 p.m.

SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	13	2	4	43	39	15
Inter Miami CF	11	3	5	38	46	36
Chicago	10	6	2	32	34	24
New England	9	7	3	30	29	25
Charlotte FC	8	7	4	28	32	28
Cincinnati	7	6	6	27	46	45
NY City FC	7	7	5	26	33	27
NY Red Bulls	7	8	4	25	30	41
D.C. United	5	5	9	24	27	30
Orlando City	6	10	3	21	31	48
Columbus	5	9	5	20	27	31
Toronto FC	4	7	8	20	26	33
Philadelphia	5	10	4	19	28	35
CF Montreal	4	10	5	17	25	36
Atlanta	4	12	3	15	21	34

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Houston	11	6	2	35	28	24
Vancouver	10	3	4	34	38	17
Los Angeles FC	10	6	4	34	35	20
San Jose	10	6	3	33	38	27
FC Dallas	8	5	6	30	34	26
Saint Louis	8	6	5	29	27	25
Real Salt Lake	8	6	4	28	30	26
Colorado	8	10	1	25	29	25
Minnesota	6	6	7	25	21	26
Portland	7	9	3	24	34	35
Seattle	7	7	3	24	20	22
San Diego FC	6	7	6	24	33	29
LA Galaxy	5	8	7	22	24	30
Austin FC	4	10	5	17	23	38
Sporting KC	4	13	2	14	18	48

Note: Three points for win, one point for tie.

Sunday's Scores

Chicago 2, Portland 1
NY City FC 2, Philadelphia 3
Austin FC 1, FC Dallas 2
Seattle 0, Vancouver 2

Wednesday's Games

Charlotte FC at Toronto FC, 7:30 p.m.
New England at D.C. United, 7:30 p.m.
Inter Miami CF at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
NY City FC at Cincinnati, 7:30 p.m.
Nashville at NY Red Bulls, 7:30 p.m.
Chicago at Orlando City, 7:30 p.m.
CF Montreal at Columbus, 7:30 p.m.
Saint Louis at Sporting KC, 8 p.m.
Atlanta at Minnesota, 8:30 p.m.
Austin FC at Seattle, 9:30 p.m.
Los Angeles FC at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.
FC Dallas at Real Salt Lake, 9:30 p.m.
San Diego FC at Portland, 10:30 p.m.
San Jose at LA Galaxy, 10:30 p.m.
Houston at Vancouver, 10:30 p.m.

Saturday's Games

Seattle at Cincinnati, 7:30 p.m.
LA Galaxy at CF Montreal, 7:30 p.m.
Real Salt Lake at Orlando City, 7:30 p.m.
Toronto FC at Inter Miami CF, 7:30 p.m.
D.C. United at Charlotte FC, 7:30 p.m.
Chicago at NY Red Bulls, 7:30 p.m.
Houston at Saint Louis, 8:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Austin FC, 8:30 p.m.
Columbus at Nashville, 8:30 p.m.
FC Dallas at Vancouver, 9:30 p.m.
Colorado at San Diego FC, 10:30 p.m.
Portland at Los Angeles FC, 10:30 p.m.
Minnesota at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

English Premier League

Friday's Game

Arsenal vs. Coventry City, 3 p.m.

Saturday's Games

Hull City vs. Manchester United, 7:30 a.m.
Everton vs. Crystal Palace, 10 a.m.
Ipswich Town vs. Sunderland, 10 a.m.
Nottingham Forest vs. Leeds United, 10 a.m.
Brentford vs. Tottenham, 12:30 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Brighton & Hove Albion vs. Aston Villa, 9 a.m.
Manchester City vs. Bournemouth, 9 a.m.
Newcastle United vs. Liverpool, 11:30 a.m.

Monday's Game

Fulham vs. Chelsea, 3 p.m.

NWSL

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Gotham	13	3	4	43	26	13
Washington	11	5	4	37	30	18
Utah	11	6	3	36	35	23
Portland	10	6	4	34	34	29
San Diego	10	7	3	33	25	21
North Carolina	9	7	3	30	34	29
Kansas City	9	8	3	30	31	28
Seattle	8	7	3	27	23	23
Angel City	7	7	4	25	27	20
Denver	6	7	6	24	25	25
Houston	6	8	5	23	23	28
Orlando	7	11	2	23	24	31
Louisville	6	11	2	20	28	36
Boston	5	10	5	20	23	32
Bay	5	10	4	19	20	27
Chicago	4	14	1	13	9	34

Note: Three points for win, one point for tie.

Sunday's Scores

Houston 3, North Carolina 2
Angel City 1, Washington 1

Wednesday's Games

Seattle at Louisville, 6:30 p.m.
Chicago at Houston, 8 p.m.

Friday's Game

Utah at San Diego, 10 p.m.

Saturday's Games

Seattle at Kansas City, 6:30 p.m.
Boston at North Carolina, 7:30 p.m.
Denver at Portland, 8:45 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Louisville at Chicago, 2 p.m.
Orlando at Washington, 4 p.m.
Houston at Bay, 6 p.m.
Gotham at Angel City, 8 p.m.

GOLF

PGA Tour Schedule

Aug. 20-23 – BMW Championship, St. Louis
Aug. 27-30 – TOUR Championship, Atlanta
Sept. 17-20 – Biltmore Championship Asheville, Arden, NC
Sept. 24-27 – The Presidents Cup, Medinah, Ill.
Oct. 1-4 – Bank of Utah Championship, Ivins, Utah
Oct. 8-11 – Baycurrent Classic, Yokohama, Japan
Oct. 22-25 – Butterfield Bermuda Championship, Southampton, Bermuda
Oct. 29-Nov. 1 – VidantaWorld Mexico Open, Vallarta, Mexico
Nov. 5-8 – World Wide Technology Championship, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico
Nov. 12-15 – Good Good Championship, Austin, Texas
Nov. 19-22 – The RSM Classic, Sea Island, Ga.
Dec. 3-6 – Hero World Challenge, Albany, Bahamas

PGA Tour Statistics

Through Aug. 17

Season Points

1, Scottie Scheffler, 4,123. 2, Matt Fitzpatrick, 3,329. 3, Cameron Young, 3,161. 4, Wyndham Clark, 2,255. 5, Chris Gotterup, 2,254. 6, Collin Morikawa, 2,229. 7, Si Woo Kim, 2,201. 8, Sam Burns, 2,078. 9, Tommy Fleetwood, 2,046. 10, Ludvig Aberg, 1,929.

Scoring Average

1, Scottie Scheffler, 68.78. 2, Ben Kohles, 69.44. 3, Collin Morikawa, 69.46. 4, Matt Fitzpatrick, 69.51. 5, Tommy Fleetwood, 69.67. 6, Cameron Young, 69.68. 7, Sam Burns, 69.74. 8, Xander Schauffele, 69.78. 9, Chris Gotterup, 69.80. 10, Jake Knapp, 69.80.

Driving Distance

1, Aldrich Potgieter, 330.70. 2, Michael Brennan, 326.30. 3, Marco Penge, 325.00. 4, Nicolai Hojgaard, 323.90. 5, Rasmus Hojgaard, 323.00. 6, Gary Woodland, 322.30. 7, Chris Gotterup, 322.20. 8, Min Woo Lee, 320.90. 9, Jesper Svensson, 320.20. 10, Gordon Sargent, 319.90.

Driving Accuracy Percentage

1, Ben Kohles, 76.61%. 2, Russell Henley, 72.81%. 3, Aaron Rai, 71.41%. 4, Davis Chatfield, 71.20%. 5, Joel Dahmen, 71.05%. 6, Zac Blair, 69.97%. 7, Collin Morikawa, 69.71%. 8, Lucas Glover, 69.65%. 9, Emiliano Grillo, 69.18%. 10, Si Woo Kim, 69.14%.

Greens in Regulation Percentage

1, Ben Kohles, 74.31%. 2, Scottie Scheffler, 72.73%. 3, Jordan Smith, 71.75%. 4, Keita Nakajima, 71.59%. 5, Matt Fitzpatrick, 71.55%. 6, Patrick Fishburn, 71.54%. 7, Johnny Keefer, 71.42%. 8, Ryo Hisatsune, 70.90%. 9, Doug Ghim, 70.81%. 10, Collin Morikawa, 70.56%.

Total Putts Per Round

1, Chandler Phillips, 27.77%. 2, Eric Cole, 27.90%. 3, Vince Whaley, 27.91%. 4, Wyndham Clark, 28.00%. 5, Akshay Bhatia, 28.12%. 6 (tie), Peter Malnati and Sungjae Im, 28.13%. 8, Mac Meissner, 28.15%. 9, Taylor Moore, 28.16%. 10, Jacob Bridgeman, 28.17%.

Sand Save Percentage

1, Ben Griffin, 67.46%. 2, Akshay Bhatia, 66.36%. 3, Brice Garnett, 65.33%. 4, Patrick Cantlay, 64.44%. 5, Zac Blair, 64.29%. 6, Chandler Phillips, 63.06%. 7, Christiaan Bezuidenhout, 62.89%. 8, John VanDerLaan, 62.65%. 9, Maverick McNealy, 61.60%. 10, John Parry, 61.32%.

All-Around Ranking

1, Scottie Scheffler, 176. 2, Ludvig Aberg, 248. 3, Collin Morikawa, 269. 4, Sam Burns, 270. 5, Jake Knapp, 278. 6, Doug Ghim, 313. 7, Chris Gotterup, 325. 8, Tommy Fleetwood, 349. 9, Wyndham Clark, 350. 10, Kevin Yu, 351.

LPGA Tour Schedule

Aug. 20-23 – CPKC Women's Open, Edmonton, Canada
Aug. 27-30 – FM Championship, Norton, Mass.
Sept. 11-13 – Solheim Cup, Cromvoirt, Netherlands
Sept. 25-27 – Walmart NW Arkansas Championship Presented by P&G, Arkansas, Ark.
Oct. 1-4 – LOTTE Championship presented by Hoakalei, Ewa Beach, Hawaii
Oct. 15-18 – Buick LPGA Shanghai, Shanghai, China PR
Oct. 22-25 – BMW Ladies Championship, Jeollanam-do, Korea Republic
Oct. 29-Nov. 1 – Maybank Championship, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Nov. 5-8 – TOTO Japan Classic, Ibaraki, Japan
Nov. 12-15 – The ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican, Belleair, Fla.
Nov. 19-22 – CME Group Tour Championship, Naples, Fla.

LPGA Tour Statistics

Through Aug. 17

Season Points

1, Nelly Korda, 3,675. 2, Hae-Ran Ryu, 2,369. 3, Hyo Joo Kim, 1,851. 4, Miyu Yamashita, 1,772. 5, Jeeno Thitikul, 1,758. 6, Lottie Woad, 1,450. 7, Hannah Green, 1,382. 8, Ruoning Yin, 1,265. 9, Ina Yoon, 1,178. 10, Jin Hee Im, 1,148.

Driving Distance

1, Riley Smyth, 288.74. 2, Julia Lopez Ramirez, 288.55. 3, Auston Kim, 280.58. 4, Polly Mack, 279.46. 5, Suvichaya Vinijchaitham, 278.26. 6, Ina Yoon, 277.93. 7, Laney Frye, 277.63. 8, Nanna Koerstz Madsen, 276.33. 9, Helen Briem, 276.18. 10, Bailey Tardy, 274.47.

Driving Accuracy Percentage

1, Andrea Lee, 82.67%. 2, Chella Choi, 80.08%. 3, Miyu Yamashita, 79.73%. 4, Hyo Joo Kim, 78.79%. 5, Allisen Corpuz, 78.55%. 6, Megan Khang, 77.83%. 7, Lauren Coughlin, 77.01%. 8, Na Rin An, 76.82%. 9, MinJi Kang, 76.30%. 10, Gurleen Kaur, 75.60%.

Greens in Regulation Percentage

1, Hae-Ran Ryu, NaN%. 2, Jeeno Thitikul, NaN%. 3, Isabella Fierro, NaN%. 4, Lottie Woad, NaN%. 5, Dongeun Lee, NaN%. 6, Nelly Korda, NaN%. 7, Pajaree Anannarukarn, NaN%. 8, A Lim Kim, NaN%. 9, Lauren Coughlin, NaN%. 10, Andrea Lee, NaN%.

Total Putts Per Round

1, Mi Hyang Lee, 28.27%. 2, Minami Katsu, 28.35%. 3, Hyo Joo Kim, 28.40%. 4, Alexa Pano, 28.61%. 5, Angel Yin, 28.66%. 6, Patty Tavatanakit, 28.67%. 7, Jin Hee Im, 28.77%. 8, Yuka Saso, 29.00%. 9, Gemma Dryburgh, 29.02%. 10, Ariya Jutanugarn, 29.08%.

Sand Save Percentage

1, Pornanong Phatlum, NaN%. 2, Peiyun Chien, NaN%. 3, Nelly Korda, NaN%. 4, Jin Hee Im, NaN%. 5, Minjee Lee, NaN%. 6, Patty Tavatanakit, NaN%. 7, Minami Katsu, NaN%. 8, Celine Borge, NaN%. 9, Jing Yan, NaN%. 10, Ryann O'Toole, NaN%.

AUTO RACING

NASCAR Cup Series Point Leaders

Through Aug. 17

1. Denny Hamlin, 969.
2. Ryan Blaney, 854.
3. Ty Gibbs, 842.
4. Tyler Reddick, 831.
5. Chase Briscoe, 715.
6. Chase Elliott, 695.
7. Christopher Bell, 695.
8. Kyle Larson, 660.
9. Joey Logano, 659.
10. Chris Buescher, 653.
11. Carson Hocevar, 645.
12. William Byron, 630.
13. Daniel Suárez, 618.
14. Bubba Wallace, 587.
15. Austin Cindric, 574.
16. Shane Van Gisbergen, 567.
17. Ryan Preece, 517.
18. Ross Chastain, 504.
19. Brad Keselowski, 489.
20. Erik Jones, 486.

NASCAR Cup Series Schedule

Aug. 23 – Dollar Tree 301, New Hampshire
Aug. 29 – Coke Zero Sugar 400, Daytona Beach, Fla.
Sept. 6 – Cook Out Southern 500, Darlington, SC
Sept. 13 – Enjoy Illinois 300, Madison
Sept. 19 – Bass Pro Shops Night Race, Bristol, Tenn.
Sept. 27 – Hollywood Casino 400, Kansas City, Kan.
Oct. 4 – South Point 400, Las Vegas, Nev.
Oct. 11 – Bank of America 400, Concord, NC
Oct. 18 – Freeway Insurance 500, Avondale, Ariz.
Oct. 25 – YellaWood 500, Talladega, Ala.
Nov. 1 – Xfinity 500, Martinsville, Va.
Nov. 8 – NASCAR Cup Series Championship Race, Homestead, Fla.

Sports Weekly

On newsstands: After 19 years under Mike Tomlin, Pittsburgh's NFL training camp isn't the same without intense tackling drills. The Steelers hope that's a good thing. Plus, one game into the Browns' QB1 battle, columnist Nate Davis writes it's clear which direction to go – and now – and Fernando Mendoza's Raiders debut proves Kirk Cousins' value. In baseball, we remember the late Tommy John, who allowed Frank Jobe to do revolutionary UCL procedure that saved careers for generations of pitchers. Plus, will Tarik Skubal go home to the Tigers? Every MLB star traded at the deadline said the right things on the way out like Skubal, but do they return? As always, we have Nightengale's notebook, MLB power rankings, stats and box scores. You can order the edition at onlinestore.usatoday.com and subscribe to the magazine by going to mysportsweekly.com or by calling 800-872-1415.

WEATHER

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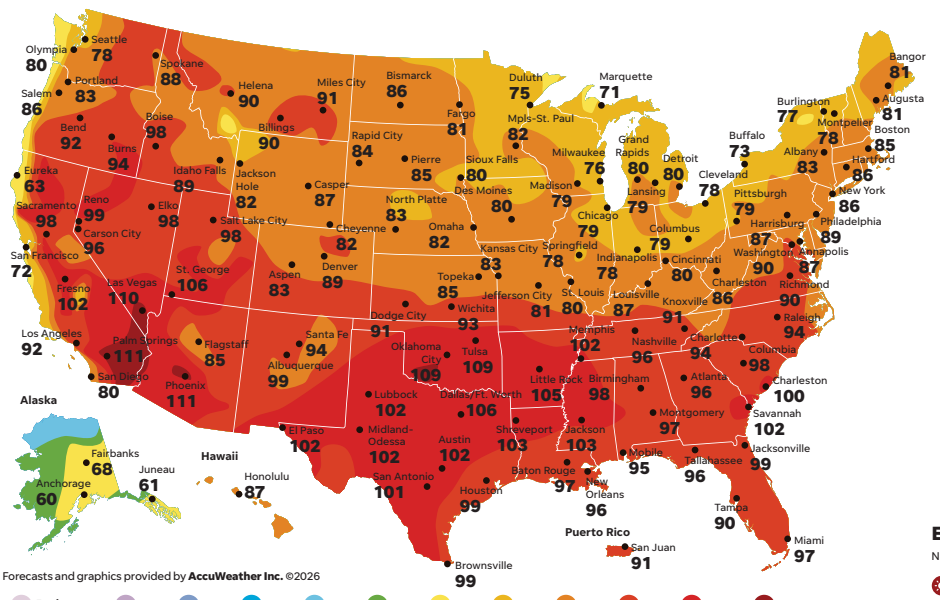
TODAY'S FORECAST

Humidity will be noticeable from the **Southeast** to the **Ohio Valley** today. Increased moisture will help spark thunderstorms from the **Mississippi Valley** into the interior **Northeast**. Across the **Southeast**, spotty storms will develop near the coast, with the heaviest activity along the Atlantic Coast of **Florida**, where downpours may lead to ponding on roadways.

Severe thunderstorms will develop from **South Dakota** to eastern **Colorado** and western **Kansas**, bringing a risk of flash flooding, hail and localized damaging wind gusts. Farther south, storms will be less widespread and strong but will still dot parts of **New Mexico** and **Arizona**.

Heat will persist across the **Southeast** and the southern **Plains** while expanding westward toward the **West Coast**.

TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURES



Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather Inc.** ©2026

Below 10 | 10s | 20s | 30s | 40s | 50s | 60s | 70s | 80s | 90s | 100s | 110+

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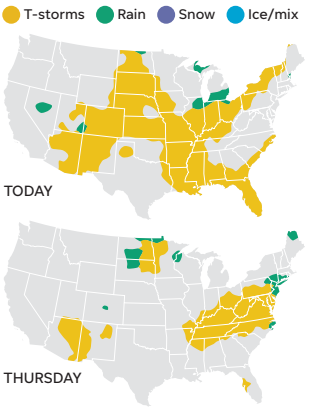
PRECIPITATION FORECAST

T-storms | Rain | Snow | Ice/mix



EXTREMES

Note: For contiguous 48 states through Monday

HOTTEST: 116° Death Valley, Calif.
COLDEST: 36° Walden, Colo.

TOP TRAVEL CITIES

Air quality index **(AQI)**

ATLANTA	BALTIMORE	BOSTON	CHARLOTTE	CHICAGO	DALLAS/FT. WORTH
WED Partly sunny 96/75	WED Mostly sunny 88/71	WED Fog 85/70	WED Mostly sunny 94/73	WED Shower 79/64	WED Hot 106/83
THU Very hot 98/76	THU T-storms 87/68	THU Shower 83/65	THU Heavy t-storm 97/74	THU Mostly sunny 83/65	THU Hot 106/83
FRI A.P.M. t-storm 93/73	FRI T-storms 83/68	FRI Partly sunny 77/63	FRI Heavy t-storm 88/72	FRI Partly sunny 81/66	FRI Hot 107/82
AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate

DENVER	DETROIT	HONOLULU	HOUSTON	LAS VEGAS	LOS ANGELES
WED Heavy t-storm 89/62	WED Shower 80/61	WED A.P.M. shower 87/75	WED Very warm 99/79	WED Hot 110/86	WED Partly sunny 92/69
THU Very warm 92/65	THU Mostly sunny 79/62	THU An A.M. shower 88/75	THU Sunny, warm 99/80	THU Hot 109/87	THU Sunny, warm 91/69
FRI Very warm 95/66	FRI Some sun 82/62	FRI Showers around 89/77	FRI Hot 100/80	FRI Partly sunny 103/84	FRI Mostly sunny 90/70
AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate

MIAMI	MPLS-ST. PAUL	NEW ORLEANS	NEW YORK	ORLANDO	PHILADELPHIA
WED Stray t-storm 97/81	WED Partly sunny 82/65	WED Stray t-storm 96/78	WED Mostly sunny 86/73	WED A.P.M. t-storm 91/78	WED Very warm 89/74
THU Stray t-storm 95/81	THU Stray t-storm 84/67	THU Stray t-storm 95/79	THU Brief showers 82/67	THU Stray t-storm 93/78	THU Brief showers 86/70
FRI Stray t-storm 94/80	FRI Stray t-storm 85/63	FRI Stray t-storm 96/77	FRI Partly sunny 82/68	FRI Stray t-storm 94/77	FRI Incr. clouds 86/70
AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate

PHOENIX	SALT LAKE CITY	SAN DIEGO	SAN FRANCISCO	SEATTLE	WASHINGTON
WED Stray t-storm 111/90	WED Sunny, warm 98/73	WED Humid 80/69	WED Breezy 72/58	WED Turning sunny 78/58	WED Mostly sunny 90/75
THU Stray t-storm 111/90	THU Hot 101/75	THU Humid 78/70	THU Breezy 68/58	THU Mostly sunny 82/59	THU T-storms 87/71
FRI Hot 112/90	FRI Very warm 100/73	FRI Humid 79/70	FRI Breezy 69/57	FRI Partly sunny 81/59	FRI T-storms 83/70
AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate

c Cloudy f Fog i Ice r Rain sf Snowflurries sn Snow w Windy dr Drizzle h Haze pc Partly cloudy s Sunny sh Showers t Thunderstorms

U.S. CITIES

	TODAY	THU
Akron, Ohio	77/62t	77/55t
Albany, N.Y.	83/64pc	81/55pc
Albuquerque	99/71t	95/70pc
Allentown, Pa.	87/66s	80/60t
Amarillo, Texas	105/68t	97/70c
Anaheim, Calif.	93/67pc	91/69s
Anchorage, Alaska	60/53r	60/53sh
Aspen, Colo.	83/52t	84/54t
Atlantic City, N.J.	86/73s	82/71sh
Augusta, Ga.	98/70pc	100/74pc
Austin, Texas	102/78s	104/79s
Bakersfield, Calif.	102/76pc	105/74pc
Baton Rouge, La.	97/78t	98/75t
Billings, Mont.	90/60pc	94/61s
Birmingham, Ala.	98/75pc	96/73t
Bismarck, N.D.	86/59s	89/58sh
Boise, Idaho	98/69s	100/72pc
Buffalo, N.Y.	73/59t	78/56s
Burlington, Vt.	77/62t	79/58pc
Cedar Rapids, Iowa	81/59pc	79/64pc
Charleston, S.C.	100/79t	96/78t
Charleston, W.Va.	86/67f	78/66t
Cheyenne, Wyo.	82/56t	87/62pc
Cincinnati	80/67t	81/65t
Cleveland	78/64t	77/57c
Colorado Springs	80/58t	88/62t
Columbia, S.C.	98/75s	101/75pc
Columbus, Ohio	79/66t	80/62t
Corpus Christi, Texas	98/79s	98/78w
Dayton, Ohio	76/66t	82/62t
Daytona Beach, Fla.	94/76t	93/75t
Des Moines, Iowa	80/62pc	83/66pc
Duluth, Minn.	75/54pc	71/54t
Durham, N.C.	93/71s	96/71t
El Paso, Texas	102/76s	104/78s
Fairbanks, Alaska	68/52c	66/51c
Flagstaff, Ariz.	85/56t	82/56t
Fargo, N.D.	81/61pc	88/59t
Fort Myers, Fla.	94/80t	92/79pc
Fort Smith, Ark.	109/80s	100/76t
Fort Wayne, Ind.	79/58t	81/56pc
Fresno, Calif.	102/72s	105/71pc
Grand Rapids, Mich.	80/54pc	79/59pc
Green Bay, Wis.	79/50pc	79/61s
Greensboro, N.C.	92/72s	91/69t
Greenville, S.C.	93/71s	94/72t
Harrisburg, Pa.	87/70f	82/64t
Hartford, Conn.	86/66pc	84/59pc
Indianapolis	78/66t	84/63pc
Islip, N.Y.	85/70f	85/67sh
Jackson, Miss.	103/77t	100/75t
Jacksonville, Fla.	99/76t	97/74t
Jefferson City, Mo.	81/68t	83/65pc
Kansas City	83/66t	83/66c
Key West, Fla.	92/83s	90/82s
Knoxville, Tenn.	91

Where poll voters disagree, who's right?

Blake Toppmeyer
Columnist
USA TODAY NETWORK

College football coaches and the media who cover them agree – on a lot, apparently. At least, they do when it comes to preseason rankings.

The Associated Press this week released its preseason poll, and the media's rankings closely reflect the US LBM Coaches Poll, published two weeks previously.

The top 10 is nearly identical in the two polls, with just a slight differentiation.

Down ballot, a few differences of opinion emerge, although they're relatively minor. Most teams are ranked within two spots of the same position in each poll.

Here's a look at some of the biggest discrepancies between college football's two major polls, with my ruling on who got it right.

LSU

- **AP:** No. 11
- **Coaches:** No. 13
- **Who got it right?** AP

I'd take it one additional step and put LSU in the top 10. LSU spent big to hire Lane Kiffin and his offensive coordinator, Charlie Weis Jr. It also spent tens of millions to assemble a very talented roster that can win immediately. So what if a lot of that talent came from the transfer portal? Kiffin proved at Ole Miss he knows how to blend transfers from all over the country. His latest transfer haul includes a who's who of the portal. LSU just needs transfer quarterback Sam Leavitt to recover his 2024 form, after a 2025 slump that included a foot injury.

Alabama

- **AP:** No. 13
- **Coaches:** No. 11
- **Who got it right?** Coaches

Skepticism hovers over Alabama. These Tide are not the indomitable Alabama of old, but the media's ranking comes off as being too heavy handed and overly influenced by Indiana routing Alabama in the Rose Bowl. Don't forget, Indiana smashed Oregon in the College Football Playoff, too. Alabama's secondary overflows with talent, headlining a defense that should rank among the SEC's best. The biggest question centers on an offensive line marked by youth and transfers. That group must jell. Alabama hasn't named a starting quarterback, but the position features upside, particularly in Keelon Russell, a former blue-chip recruit.

Washington

- **AP:** No. 17
- **Coaches:** No. 19
- **Who got it right?** Coaches

Demond Williams Jr. is one of the Big Ten's best quarterbacks, so it's easy to understand why some voters are bullish on the Huskies. Williams enjoys the luxury of playing behind a familiar offensive line. The defense will determine how high Washington climbs. A defense that helped UW win nine games last season returned just a few starters. The Huskies also lost some top skill position talent to the NFL. Betting handicappers set Washington's over/under win total at 7 ½. I'd take the over, but 8-4 would come up short of a No. 17 ranking.

Alabama wide receiver Ryan Williams (2) celebrates his TD catch in front of LSU defensive back DJ Pickett in 2025. GARY COSBY JR./IMAGN IMAGES

Tennessee

- **AP:** No. 20
- **Coaches:** No. 18
- **Who got it right?** AP

Tennessee finished last season unranked and didn't beat any opponent that finished with a winning record. The Vols should be improved, but the coaches poll ranking seems too lofty for a program transitioning to a young starting quarterback, whether freshman Faizon Brandon or sophomore George MacIntyre wins the job. Tennessee made a strong hire of defensive coordinator Jim Knowles. He brought in a wave of transfers. Historically, Knowles' impact becomes particularly noticeable in his second year on staff. Tennessee fits into that category of Top 25 teams that fall short of being playoff contenders.

Clemson

- **AP:** Unranked
- **Coaches:** No. 23
- **Who got it right?** AP

Clemson has no business being ranked. The coaches' ranking for Clemson amounts to lifetime achievement recognition for Dabo Swinney. Yes, he's had a remarkable career, but, in the here and now, Clemson had to replace many of the defensive starters off a team that flopped its way to 7-6. It's also transitioning to a new starting quarterback, Christopher Vizzina. As usual, Swinney didn't accomplish enough in the portal.

Louisville

- **AP:** No. 24
- **Coaches:** Unranked
- **Who got it right?** AP

If Clemson shouldn't be ranked, then which team should replace it in the Top 25? Louisville makes a fine choice. The Cardinals will have transfers starting all over. That's OK, because Jeff Brohm signed one of the best portal hauls of any ACC team. Louisville boasts a really strong backfield, led by star tailback Isaac Brown. He rushed for more than 100 yards in Louisville's takedown of Miami last season. Brohm must demonstrate his quarterback development skills with transfer Lincoln Kienholz, the former Ohio State backup.

Blake Toppmeyer is the USA TODAY Network's senior national college football columnist. Email him at BToppmeyer@gannett.com and follow him on X @btoppmeyer

Michigan players plant their team's flag at midfield following the 13-10 win in 2024 against Ohio State at Ohio Stadium. BARBARA J. PERENIC/THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Hayes

Continued from Page 1C

their collective minds, and Michigan fans believing, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Whittingham was playing some chess-level Jedi mind tricks.

Because don't kid yourself, Whittingham knows exactly what it's like to play and coach in a game that means *everything*. He was a star linebacker at BYU as a player, and worked for Utah as an assistant and head coach for three decades.

The Holy War, everyone, is about as mean and nasty and downright disgusting as it gets in college football rivalries. In 2008, after Whittingham's unbeaten Utah team beat one-loss BYU by 24 in Salt Lake City, a fan held up a large sign in the middle of the on-field chaos of celebration.

It read, *"Where's your God now?"*

Earlier this spring, I reminded Whittingham of that moment when he was sitting his office in Ann Arbor, barely three months into the gig.

"Yeah, that deal is unique. But it's regional," he said. "This one is national. This one is really big."

He gets it. Just like Day gets it – though in a more oddly insecure way.

I'm not sure any coach in the history of The Game was more impacted by the five-season stretch from 2020 to 2024. It began with the 2020 game, which Michigan eventually was forced to cancel because it said it couldn't field a team with COVID restrictions.

It was earlier that year that then-Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh accused the Ohio State coaching staff of illegal contact with players during the suspension of activities because of the pandemic. You know, the very thing the Michigan staff was accused of, and eventually sanctioned for, by the NCAA.

Day privately told his staff they would "hang a hundred on Michigan," and the declaration was leaked, and the teams never played – and the next thing you know, Michigan was hanging 42, 45 and 30 on the Buckeyes in successive wins.

Three losses that crushed Day and the Buckeyes, and then a fourth straight that brought the program to its knees. That was the season, in 2024, where Day bared his soul about the previous three losses, and how he compared the rivalry to war.

It's not war, it's a game. It's about preparation and execution and, more times than not, who controls the line of scrimmage.

Players win games. Not Jedi mind tricks or changing tradition or post traumatic Michigan disorder.

Ohio State beat Michigan last season in Ann Arbor because it had the better team, the better quarterback and the better coaching staff. The Buckeyes were better prepared, and made it look easy in the cold and snow.

That doesn't mean we can't enjoy the offseason dance of how The Game will be won. Or lost.

It will have nothing to do with hate or moving Senior Day festivities to the season opener.

For the winner, anyway.

Matt Hayes is the senior national college football writer for USA TODAY Sports Network. Follow him on X at @MattHayesCFB

Dragon

Continued from Page 1C

a Super Bowl 30 T-shirt when he arrived at training camp. A not-so-subtle nod to the Cowboys' last Super Bowl victory 30 years ago (Jan. 28, 1996). Multiple players have talked about the Super Bowl as the Cowboys prepare for the season in Oxnard, California.

"That's important when you're a champion. You can speak to that as we climb this ladder, and we get closer to our main objective which is SoFi (Stadium) 2027 on Valentine's Day," Schottenheimer said of Miller's championship experience.

"The biggest reason is we think he's going to impact us on and off the field as a player. He's gonna give us great versatility and great depth as a pass rusher. And then the locker room, the experience and the fact that he cares about his teammates."

Miller is the latest addition to what's been a defensive overhaul since the Cowboys traded Micah Parsons to the Green Bay Packers a year ago. Dallas named Christian Parker defensive coordinator in January and then supplied him with as many as six new starters on defense.

Don't expect Miller to start. The Cowboys are excited about edge rushers Rashan Gary, Donovan Ezeiruaku and 2026 first-round pick Malachi Lawrence. At 37 years old, Miller's not the disruptive edge rusher that he was in his prime. But his nine sacks with the Washington Commanders last season are proof he's still got some pass rush juice left in the tank.

Still, Miller's championship experience is what's most beneficial to the Cowboys.

"We're not expecting him to come here and play 40 plays a game. Ten to 15 great plays sound good to me. If it's 18 to 20, that's cool, too. He's a great addition, but that room's really talented. I'm so excited about what we're building in that room with those guys," Schottenheimer said. "Von is going to make us better on and off the field."

Follow Tyler Dragon on X: @TheTylerDragon

Pegula

Continued from Page 1C

Pegula continued, "So yeah, I don't know. I visualized it being of course an amazing achievement, but then at the same time, I've also seen it as every week's the same. We're out here trying to compete and win no matter what the situation is. So I'm not sure if much would really change, to be honest, besides a really nice trophy and having that next to my name or whatever it would be."

Instead of focusing on the larger task at hand, Pegula said she's found great success "working backwards" and honing in on the small victories that stack over time. It's a mentality she credits with her turnaround that has her enjoying the game more than ever.

"I think what really changed my career from when I was younger is kind of falling in love with that process instead of looking so much at these goals that seem really far away," she added. "I just responded much better with that way of thinking. Everyone's different, but I loved embracing the grind, embracing that process, the grittiness of it. I mean, that's what tennis is. We play a lot of matches, we play all year round, and it's very individual. So if you don't fall in love with the process, I don't think it's quite as enjoyable."

Top Americans to contend at US Open

Pegula isn't the only top contender hailing from the USA ahead of the fourth and final Grand Slam of the year. Five American women are in the Top 25 – Pegula (3), Coco Gauff (4), Amanda Anisimova (10), Iva Jovic (16) and Madison Keys (24) – which "says a lot" about the state of U.S. tennis, Pegula added.

"I think being able to share that with fellow countrywoman and countrymen that are around you playing makes it seem like you're a little bit more on a team," Pegula said. "This sport is so individuals that I think it's kind of nice to have that feeling that we're all kind of in it together. And I think it also alleviates some pressure. There's not just one person, one American that has to win the US Open."

Jessica Pegula acknowledges fans after defeating Emma Navarro in the third round at the Cincinnati Open on Aug. 17. AARON DOSTER/IMAGN IMAGES

Gauff was the last American woman to win the US Open in 2023. Pegula finished runner-up in 2024 and fellow American Amanda Anisimova finished second in 2025, both behind back-to-back champion Aryna Sabalenka. Pegula learned in her finals appearance that you aren't always going to have your best any given day.

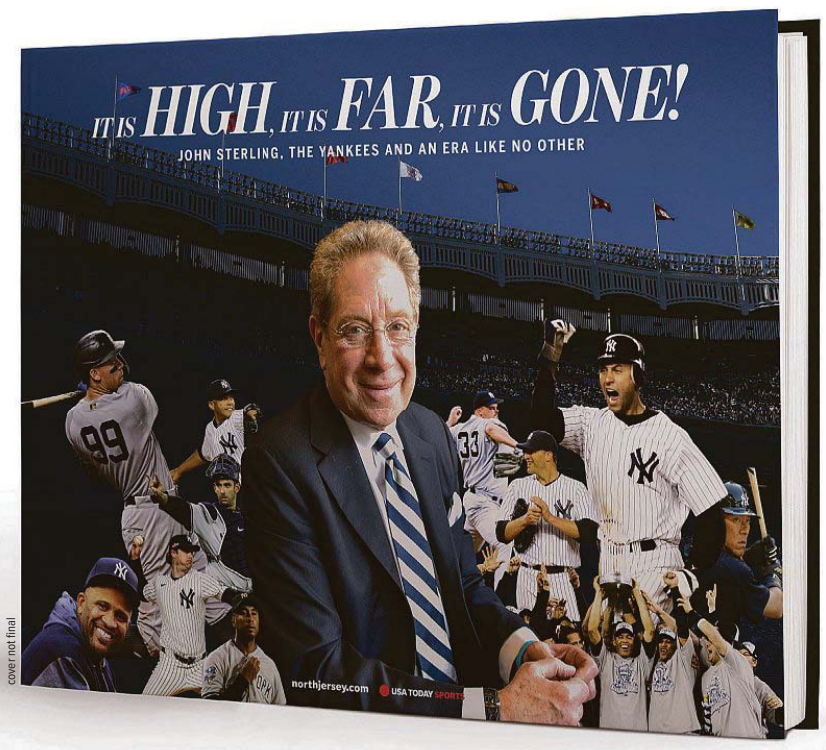
"There's a lot of matches where you don't feel great. There's a lot of really tough moments in all of those matches," added Pegula. "It's like every match is going to have its own challenges. It doesn't mean it's going to come easy at all, no matter what the score is, no matter what's happening."

The final-set tiebreak will have a twist at the 2026 US Open. Starting in the quarterfinal round, Vital Proteins will give away $250K in collagen if a main draw singles match reaches a final-set tiebreak. The company will also gift an Ultimate Fan Experience for the 2027 US Open, in addition to a $15K wellness stipend.

Reach USA TODAY National Women's Sports Reporter Cydney Henderson at chenderson@gannett.com and follow her on X at @CydHenderson

The career of a legend MEMORIALIZED

The storied career of John Sterling in a hardcover collector's book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For 36 years, John Sterling called every single Yankees game. Every pitch, every hit, every walk-off ... 5,060 consecutive broadcasts without missing one. His home run calls were woven into New York baseball. "It is high, it is far, it is gone!" was the sound of summer in the Bronx. But this collectible book is about more than the man behind the mic. This commemorative coffee-table book from NorthJersey.com and USA TODAY Sports captures the greatest moments of the Sterling Era: the championships, the legends, the unforgettable plays. It follows Sterling's career and the Yankees era he called through photography, stories and behind-the-scenes moments. From the dynasty years of the late '90s through the 2009 World Series championship, Jeter's final season and Judge's record-breaking 62nd home run, it's the definitive visual record of one of the most celebrated runs in Yankees history. The calls that gave you chills. The championships that defined a generation. The quiet moments fans never got to see. It's all here.

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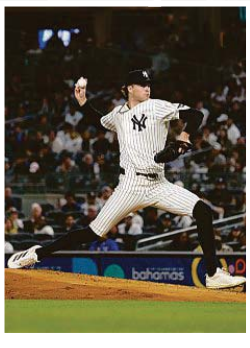


northjersey.com USA TODAY SPORTS

‘Avengers’ stars assemble to talk about ‘Doomsday’

Robert Downey Jr. and Chris Evans have jokes at D23: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event. **Page 2D**

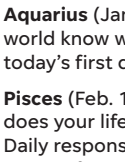
LIFELINE

JEMAL COUNTESS/GETTY IMAGES FOR TIME

HOW WAS YOUR DAY?
WITNEY CARSON

Witney Carson will have a plus one when she returns to the “Dancing With the Stars” ballroom this fall – and it won’t just be her new comedian partner. The pro dancer announced Aug. 17 that she is pregnant with her third child. She also revealed on “Good Morning America” she will be partnered with Guillermo Rodriguez of “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” on the reality competition’s upcoming season. Carson, 32, is the show’s reigning champion after taking home the Mirrorball trophy with partner Robert Irwin last season. She and her husband, Carson McAllister, are parents to two sons: Leo, 5, and Jet, 3.

IT’S YOUR BIRTHDAY
WHO’S CELEBRATING TODAY



Womack

Author **Jack Canfield** turns 82. Former President **Bill Clinton**, 80. Former second lady **Tipper Gore**, 78. Bassist **John Deacon** (Queen), 75. Actor **Jonathan Frakes**, 74. Actor **Adam Arkin**, 70. Keyboardist **Ivan Neville** (Dumpstaphunk), 67. Actor **John Stamos**, 63. Actor **Kyra Sedgwick**, 61. Singer **Lee Ann Womack**, 60.
– *USA TODAY Network*

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Aries (March 21-April 19). A creative choice may require emotional vulnerability. Are you willing to risk being genuine over cultivating attention and admiration?

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Tension brews between your home life and relationships today! What domestic changes are ready to be put into action?

Gemini (May 21-June 21). An idea needs a workable plan, not another round of discussion. See it through to the next stage today.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Will you invest in your creative impulses? Self-doubts are ready to be challenged during the first quarter moon in Scorpio.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). New chapters get built from the ground up. What needs to change to be who you want to be?

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Preparing behind the scenes? Put on your research hat and collect the data during today’s first quarter moon in Scorpio.

Libra (Sept.23-Oct. 23). A future goal tests your time, money, and confidence today. Is making the investment still worth the stretch it requires?

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Match your personal needs with your goals under today’s first quarter moon in Scorpio.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). What will you sacrifice to reach your ideals? Releasing is part of the plan during the Scorpio first quarter moon.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Today’s first quarter moon in Scorpio pushes a shared agenda forward.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Let the world know who you align with during today’s first quarter moon in Scorpio.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Where does your life need breathing room? Daily responsibilities are ready to shift as your future vision grows.

TELEVISION

John Stewart (Aaron Pierre, left) and Hal Jordan (Kyle Chandler) have a buddy-cop dynamic in HBO Max’s DC superhero mystery series “Lanterns.” PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JOHN JOHNSON/HBO MAX

‘Lanterns’ lights the way for a new breed of hero

Brian Truitt USA TODAY

“Lanterns” star Kyle Chandler wants to make a couple of things clear about why Green Lantern is better than your average superhero. • “One, we don’t need to wear capes. I’m tired of these caped crusaders. It’s just ridiculous,” says the “Friday Night Lights” alum, taking a playful dig at fellow superfriends Batman and Superman. “No. 2, we didn’t come from Krypton. We weren’t born with these [powers]. We’ve got one tool that was given to us, right or wrong, and with that tool, we perform the tasks that we need to.”

Nathan Fillion reprises his role as the Green Lantern Guy Gardner in “Lanterns.” He appeared in “Superman” and “Peacemaker.”

For a member of the intergalactic Green Lantern Corps in DC Comics lore, that job is essential to being a space cop. However, the new DC drama “Lanterns” (premiering Sunday at 9 p.m. ET/PT on HBO and HBO Max) offers a more grounded situation: Earth’s Green Lantern, Hal Jordan (Chandler), and trainee John Stewart (Aaron Pierre) travel to small-town Nebraska to investigate a murder scene that might have some alien involvement.

Green Lanterns are chosen for the gig by the Guardians of the Universe, and each has a power ring that, like an iPhone, they have to keep charged up. And instead of having inherent superpowers, they use the ring to manifest whatever the user can imagine, even allowing them to fly.

What’s special about them is “the idea that it could be anybody. It could be you. It could be anyone. You just have to be fearless,” says Nathan Fillion, who played the obnoxious Green Lantern Guy Gardner in last year’s “Superman” and the DC TV series “Peacemaker,” and also appears in “Lanterns.”

“You just have to have that thing that makes you special, that makes you worthy, the thing that we all want,” he says.

Fillion voiced Hal Jordan in some DC animated films, and Ryan Reynolds played the character in the 2011 movie misfire “Green Lantern.” “Lanterns,”

See LANTERNS, Page 2D

STREAMING

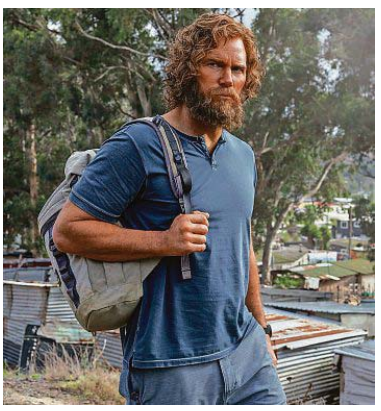
Chris Pratt pulls off sick transformation

Bryan Alexander
USA TODAY

Chris Pratt was going to have to transform to return as former Navy SEAL Lt. Cmdr. James Reece for Season 2 of Prime Video’s action series “The Terminal List” (premiering Oct. 21).

After all, the July 2022 universe-spawning series showed Reece systematically hunting down those on his list responsible for the deaths of his SEAL team along with his wife and daughter – and becoming an identity-shifting global fugitive in the process.

As USA TODAY’s exclusive first look of “Terminal List” Season 2 shows, Pratt was up to the task, even accidentally aiding his preparation to play a gaunt Reece lost at sea due to illness from the globe-spanning shoot.



Chris Pratt says he got “as emaciated as possible” to play fugitive James Reece in “Terminal List” Season 2. A severe stomach bug during filming helped the cause. PROVIDED BY JUSTIN LUBIN/PRIME VIDEO

“Through all the boat scenes I was battling E. coli and something called tick bite fever that I had gotten in Africa,” Pratt tells USA TODAY during a joint interview with “Terminal List” author Jack Carr and show creator David DiGilio. “Much of that look is from a stomach bug. There were nights I was sweating through my mattress with fever and sickness. But our schedule was so tight I didn’t take time off. It was just a matter of ‘grip it and rip it.’ ”

“It was our authenticity mandate taken to the extreme,” jokes DiGilio.

With former SEAL bestie Ben Edwards (Taylor Kitsch) killed in the final stunning moments of Season 1 (but returning in 2025’s spinoff prequel series “Terminal List: Dark Wolf”), Reece sails toward Mozambique in Edwards’ beloved sailboat. Reece, suffering from a brain tumor as his KIA SEAL teammates

See TERMINAL LIST, Page 2D

MOVIES D23

Evans, Downey Jr. assemble to tease 'Avengers: Doomsday'

Anthony Robledo and Bryan Alexander
USA TODAY

ANAHEIM, CA – Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige revealed that the upcoming "Avengers: Doomsday" will unite the Avengers, Fantastic Four and the X-Men.

"Avengers" stars Chris Evans and Robert Downey Jr. appeared on stage on Aug. 14 during D23: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event.

The duo introduced a trailer for the highly anticipated film at the Disney fan convention ahead of its Dec. 18 theatrical release. They were joined onstage by Hayley Atwell, who plays Peggy Carter.

"We know that there's nothing this crowd loves more than a happy ever after," Atwell said while referencing the final scene of "Avengers: Endgame" where Steve travels back in time to be with his beloved Peggy.

Evans told the crowd, "And Steve Rogers was so close to getting his on the end of 'Avengers: Endgame.' We should've known better."

"Yep, you should have known better indeed," Downey replied. "Someone's always there to stir things up, Evans."

Marvel Studios dropped the first full trailer of the new film July 20, giving fans a close look at the sequel bringing together heroes from various films and TV shows.

The film will see the return of "Iron Man" actor Downey, who will not reprise his role as the beloved billionaire superhero Tony Stark, but instead become the titular villain Doctor Doom. He will face off against Chris Hemsworth's Thor as well as many characters introduced since "Avengers: Endgame" dropped in 2019.

'Vision Quest' sees return of Paul Bettany and James Spader

Feige also revealed new details about the upcoming series "Vision Quest."

Not only will Paul Bettany reprise his role as the Infinity Stone-powered synthezoid Vision, but James Spader, who voiced the titular villain in 2015's "Avengers: Age of Ultron," will return to the Marvel Cinematic Universe as Ultron.

"What is it that makes us actually human?" Bettany revealed the new project asks, "Which brings us naturally to the person with most on beside you during an existential crisis. Ultron."

The series follows the Emmy-winning series "WandaVision" as well as the 2024 "Agatha All Along."

Robert Downey Jr., left, Hayley Atwell and Chris Evans at the Disney Entertainment Showcase at D23: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event on Aug. 14 in Anaheim, California. MATT WINKELMEYER/GETTY IMAGES

Hal Jordan (Kyle Chandler) gets ready to use his Green Lantern ring in "Lanterns." PROVIDED BY JOHN JOHNSON/HBO MAX

Lanterns

Continued from Page 1D

however, explores the Green Lantern Corps mythology for the first time in the rebooted DC universe – "True Detective" murder-mystery style.

Executive producer Tom King, a comic-book writer whose work inspired the recent "Supergirl" movie, saw a way to meld "emotional realism in an exaggerated universe" with "the 9 o'clock HBO show" a la "The Sopranos," he says. "There just seemed to be utter potential there with them being space cops, with Hal Jordan being his man without fear and John Stewart being this man raised in a completely different way."

Fellow "Lanterns" cocreator Damon Lindelof admittedly was more of a Marvel guy growing up. He learned about such characters as Hal Jordan and the villain Sinestro through the old "Superfriends" cartoon, and "as I got older and spent way too much time smoking pot and watching cartoons," was introduced to John Stewart through the animated "Justice League Unlimited." But, "I fell in love with Hal and John once I started doing this show."

Executive producer/cocreator Chris Mundy ("Ozark") was fascinated by Green Lantern's superpower being their imagination.

"Hal's going to do something different than John using the ring for the same situation, Mundy says. 'John's an architect, so his stuff is going to be more mechanical. In something that's so fantastical, that's really relatable."

That relatability means a lot for Pierre. "I feel as though the Green Lantern Corps is just full of rock stars," he says. "You look at John, you look at Hal, you look at Guy and you know these folks. You live with them, or you go to college with them, or work with them, or they're your neighbor."

> **"We don't need to wear capes. I'm tired of these caped crusaders. It's just ridiculous."**
> **Kyle Chandler**

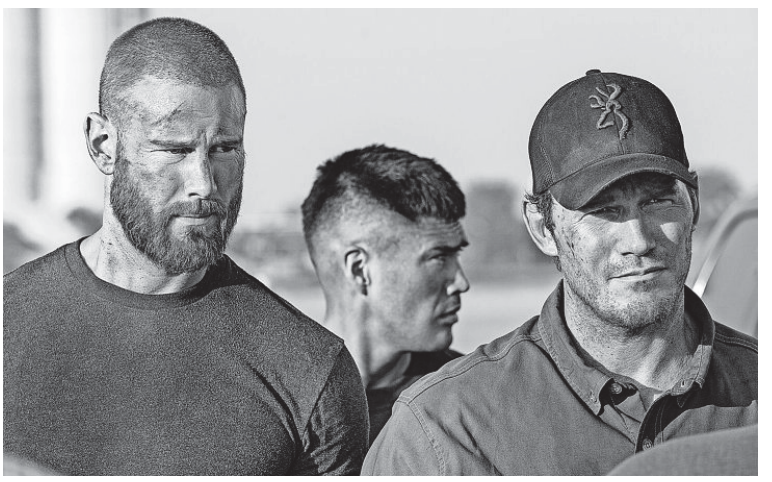
What he loves about John is his heart, as well as his desire to be great and "become the best version of himself," Pierre says. "You add that with the ring, and you have a dangerous man there."

Mundy wanted "inherent tension" but also "warmth and some humor at the same time" between Hal and John, which is why they enjoy a multigenerational buddy-cop dynamic with plenty of banter, frequent butting of heads, and the occasional begrudging respect.

Filming a car scene, Chandler, 60, remembers he and Pierre, 32, "jabbing with each other some, and we started playing our characters but in real life with each other. We were pressing each other's buttons a little bit.

"I said, 'Well, you know, that's because I'm a wiser person. And as you get older, you learn these things. You're young, you wouldn't know.' Then Aaron said something like, 'Well, that's because you're old.' And then I was like, oh, I felt that in real life. That hurt," Chandler says with a laugh.

Because both are flawed, "imperfect" characters, Pierre adds, "that is what makes us root for them."



Rafe Haistings (Tom Hopper) joins James Reece (Chris Pratt) in Season 2 of "Terminal List." PROVIDED BY MARNI GROSSMAN/PRIME

Terminal List

Continued from Page 1D

did, faces trouble at sea.

"He's not necessarily equipped to sail around the world for hundreds of days," Pratt says. "He's more a guy on the run who happened to find himself on a boat. And he's dealing with a brain tumor and a lot of regret."

The daunting task of setting up the world's most-wanted fugitive for new TV adventures – working with the very U.S. government hunting him down – fell to former Navy SEAL sniper and best-selling "Terminal List" author Carr. Carr, a series executive producer, already had charted Reece's course in his 2019 second novel, "True Believer."

"We needed a reason for Reece to get drawn back into government service and not thrown right into prison," Carr says. "It would be disingenuous to just throw Reece into another adventure."

A big part of the return is the government's belief that the Reece-trained former CIA Scorpions standout Mohammed "Mo" Farooq (Dar Salim) has apparently switched sides and is working with a major terrorist. Reece is given the chance to hunt down Mo or go to prison. The new season of what Pratt calls a "military muscular thriller" gives the action star a chance to show off precise skills in hyper-realistic battle scenes.

The series features military executive producers Jared Shaw, a former Navy SEAL who starred as Boozer in Season 1, and Max Adams, a former Army Ranger, who ensure the action, tactics and military culture remain grounded in real-world experience.

Pratt found Gabriel Luna at Arnold Schwarzenegger's Christmas party

Salim, along with Tom Hopper (who plays former SEAL Raife Hastings) and Luke Hemsworth (as hilariously sleazy CIA operative Jules Landry), return for Season 2, along with Constance Wu as crusading journalist Katie Buranek. The new season even features a posthumous appearance from Kitsch's Edwards.

Executive producer Pratt pulled off a casting coup on his own, nabbing "Terminator: Dark Fate" star Gabriel Luna for the season's biggest new role as former SEAL Freddy Strain.

Pratt says he hit it off with Luna at a 2021 Christmas party, hosted by Pratt's father-in-law and original Terminator Arnold Schwarzenegger during Season 1 "Terminal List" production.

"So I'm at Arnold's house, talking to Gabe, who I'd never met personally before," says Pratt, who instantly clicked with the like-minded actor. "And he's talking to me about so many things, including loving guitars and guns. And I was like, 'My God, he'd be so good as Freddy if we ever get a Season 2.' There's a sweet lightness to him. So when we were casting, I knew exactly who that should be."

Reece (Pratt) gets the rust out in his return for "Terminal List" Season 2, with former SEAL Freddy Strain (Gabriel Luna). PROVIDED BY JUSTIN LUBIN/PRIME VIDEO

USA TODAY CROSSWORD

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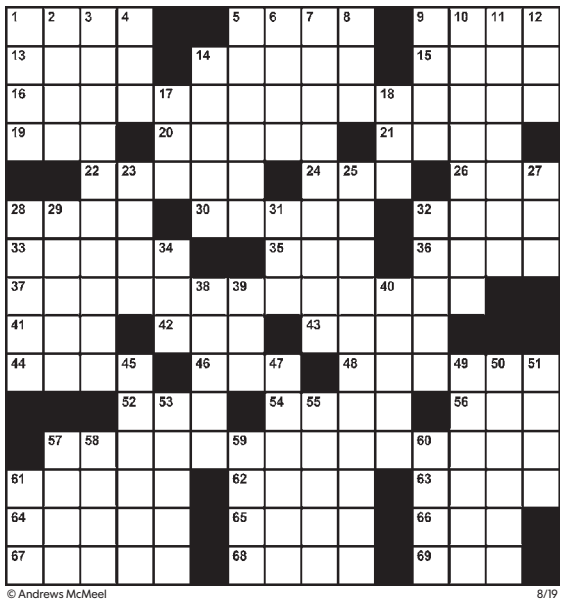
BY Matthew Stock

IN FACT



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ACROSS
1 Coke or Pepsi
5 Mooing grazers
9 "Just so you know!" ads
13 "Sad to say . . ."
14 Speed-measuring tech
15 Equity-focused community center, for short
16 Neighborhood with designer boutiques
19 Mike Wazowski from "Monsters, Inc." has one big one
20 Top group of celebs
21 ___ sweet ___
22 Soup with a tonkotsu variety
24 Late payment, e.g.
26 Supergoop! bottle letters
28 One-___ (single occurrences)
30 Photocopier brand
32 Manual's counterpart
33 Dentist's thread
35 Pottery or glassblowing, for example
36 Go up
37 "Straight from the manufacturer" purchase option
41 Large flightless bird
42 "What do ___ mean?"
43 Not wild
44 Take a power nap, say
46 Google Maps technology
48 Pain-relieving hemp product, for short
52 Tool used for tilling
54 Arthur for whom the ESPYs' Courage Award is named
56 Kissing in the park, e.g.
57 Hardly a saint
61 Handheld game that shouts instructions
62 Word before "position" or "vault"
63 Taylor Swift's "The ___ Tour"
64 Over
65 With no other changes
66 Corn unit
67 Colorado ski town
68 Past the deadline
69 Trippy tab

DOWN
1 Barista's workplace
2 Skincare brand that sounds like an exclamation
3 Intense concentration
4 Fireplace remains
5 Dog
6 "What are the ___?"
7 "Any minute now . . ."
8 Soon-to-be alumni (Abbr.)
9 Prefix with "technic"
10 Bikini, e.g.
11 Is OK with
12 Stopped standing
14 Watch brand with a crown logo
17 "That's me!"
18 Run of ___ mill
23 Aide (Abbr.)
25 "Even more dairy" pizza request
27 Nemesis
28 "Shark Tank" proposal
29 Feature of the Portland Fire and Miami Heat logos
31 Awesomesauce
32 Followed a curved path
34 Vegan milk option
38 Walkie-talkie user's "Gotcha"
39 "Gotcha"
40 Glowing fireplace bit
45 Be one's best self
47 Fried South Asian snack
49 Performances with arias
50 Driver's license, e.g.
51 Back muscles, for short
53 Frequently
55 Divided
57 Keychain attachments
58 Each
59 Milky gemstone
60 Sense
61 Sheep's sound

Tuesday's Answer

A	Z	T	E	C		S	U	D	S		S	G	T	S
C	O	A	C	H		P	L	O	P		T	R	I	P
S	O	D	O	I		A	C	N	E		R	A	G	U
			S	C	R	E	E	N	S	A	V	E	R	
	S	T	E	E	L	E	R		D	I	Y	E	R	S
P	A	E	L	L	A			S	S	E				
E	T	N	A		I	B	E	T		V	I	S	A	S
W	A	S	T	E	M	A	N	A	G	E	M	E	N	T
S	N	E	E	R		L	O	G	O		P	I	T	A
				A	G	E			O	P	E	N	E	R
E	L	P	A	S	O		M	E	D	A	L	E	D	
P	E	A	C	E	K	E	E	P	E	R				
E	D	I	T		A	R	C	S		A	N	T	S	Y
E	G	G	O		R	I	C	O		D	I	A	N	E
S	E	E	R		T	E	A	M		E	X	P	O	S

8/18

Answers: Call 1-900-988-8300, 99 cents a minute; or, with a credit card, 1-800-320-4280.

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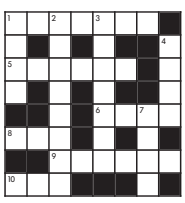
TXTPERT



8/19

Across
1. 7764533
5. 737368
6. 8733
8. 473
9. 837767
10. 963

Down
1. 7673
2. 62765383
3. 5264867
4. 2843
7. 3767

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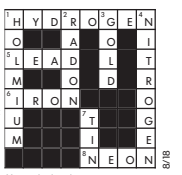
Today's theme
Feelings

Use the phone keypad to decode the clues. For example: 2 could be A, B or C ... and 5678 could be LOST



Yesterday's solution 8/18

Numbers

More puzzles: **PLAY.usatoday.com**
Want solutions? **answers.usatoday.com**
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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).

6			7	1	9			
				4			8	
3		1					7	
5	9			7				4
			2		8			
8				6			9	3
	8					6		1
	2			3				
			6	8	5			9

8/19

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★★☆☆

SUDOKU FUSION ON YOUR PHONE
puzzles.usatoday.com

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Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x2 box contains the numbers 1 through 6 (no repeats).

2			4		
3		4	5		
		6	2		5
5		2	3		
		3	1		2
		5			3

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★★☆☆

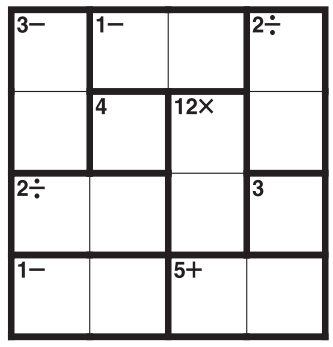
Tuesday's Answers

8	5	4	2	9	3
2	3	9	6	7	1
1	7	6	4	5	8
7	9	1	8	2	4
4	2	3	7	6	5
5	6	8	1	3	9
3	4	2	5	8	7
6	1	5	9	4	2
9	8	7	3	1	6

6	4	2	3	1	5
5	3	1	4	6	2
3	6	4	2	5	1
2	1	5	6	4	3
4	5	3	1	2	6
1	2	6	5	3	4

8/18

KENKEN



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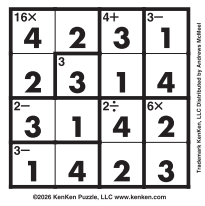
1. Each row and column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 without repeating.

2. The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners.

3. Freebies: fill in single-box cages with the number in the top-left corner.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



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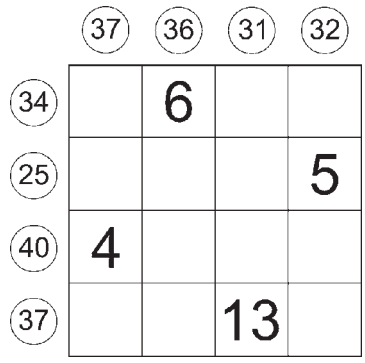
KUBOK 16

By Davide Coppo Difficulty: EXPERT



Solution to Tuesday's puzzle

15	9	11	13
10	12	5	14
1	8	4	16
3	2	7	6

Enter the missing numbers from 1 to 16 without repetitions so that the sum of the four numbers in each row and column is the same as the corresponding circled number.

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8/19/26

Words

WORD ROUNDUP

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek 8/19

Find and Circle:
Five four-letter fruits ☑☐☐☐☐
Four flowing bodies of water ☐☐☐☐
Three Navy ranks ☐☐☐
Two four-letter U.S. states ☐☐
Two five-letter cheeses ☐☐

P	R	P	H	A	W	R	T	B	P	O	N			
D	L	A	D	K	S	L	I	M	E	I	J			
W	T	U	E	S	A	T	K	V	A	H	E			
U	O	E	M	R	W	O	R	T	E	O	T			
G	R	R	I	I	O	I	P	E	A	R	A			
C	V	M	W	R	Z	A	S	R	A	K	D			
B	D	I	B	C	C	J	H	S	R	M	D			
A	K	L	I	E	U	T	E	N	A	N	T			

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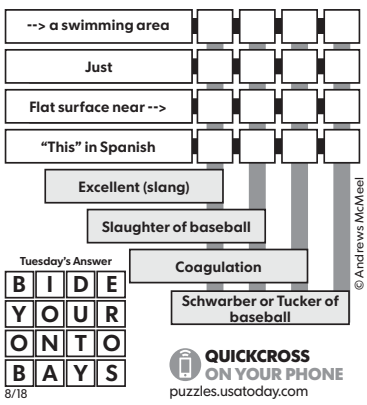
Tuesday's answer: SCORPION SPIDER MITE TICK / GROOVE WHOOSH SMOOCH SMOOTH / EARTH MARCH GAMMA / FINLAND SWEDEN NORWAY / MONDAY

QUICKCROSS

By John Wilmes 8/19



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Tuesday's Answer

B	I	D	E
Y	O	U	R
O	N	T	O
B	A	Y	S

8/18

QUICKCROSS ON YOUR PHONE
puzzles.usatoday.com

UP & DOWN WORDS

By David L. Hoyt and Russell L. Hoyt 8/19

1. **FACTORY**
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____ **MACHINE**

Clues:
1. Discount retail location
2. Bargain-hunter's destination
3. Kevin James played one
4. 1997 Stallone film
5. Arrive atop
6. As scheduled
7. Sci-fi invention

Tuesday's Answer

BIG / TOP
TOP / DOG
DOG / PARK
PARK / PLACE
PLACE / SETTING
SETTING / SUN
SUN / GOD

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DON'T QUOTE ME®

Soccer player Mia Hamm offers this advice.

©WIGGLES 3D GAMES

Rearrange the words to complete the quote.
BAR EACH LITTLE RAISE SUCCEED WHAT

"CELEBRATE ___ YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED, BUT _____ THE ___ A _____ HIGHER ___ TIME YOU _____."

8/19

Tuesday's Answer: "Companies have got to learn to eat change for breakfast." - Tom Peters

7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES **SOLUTIONS**
1 lions, tigers & bears' spots (4) _____
2 least appealing (8) _____
3 March or September event (7) _____
4 British actress Olivia (6) _____
5 shade of blond (10) _____
6 rested on the patellas (5) _____
7 acted the buttinsky (7) _____

STR	UI	GR	ZO	EST
OS	LM	ME	NOX	AW
EQ	BER	AN	OSS	KN
RY	LED	ELT	DD	CO

Tuesday's Answers: 1. MINERS 2. SLUMP 3. HEALTH 4. HAWTHORNE 5. ZILLIONAIRE 6. PAULINE 7. MAELSTROM 8/19

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JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ASYES
LERBE
NTSRWE
DLPDEA

See you soon!
Love you!
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Facebook
AS THE TRAIN PULLED AWAY, THOSE ON THE PLATFORM, WAVING FAREWELL WERE ---

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

" ( ) - ( ) "

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: MUMMY COVER SUMMER WISELY
Answer: The former bodybuilder still remembered his workout routine thanks to — MUSCLE MEMORY

BONUS CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 — -thee-well
5 Object from a dig site
10 Hit head-on
13 Painful
14 Betel palm
15 Assigned part
16 Sapling
17 Actor — Moore
18 Actress — Thompson
19 Kelp
21 Brillo or SOS (2 wds.)
23 Raison d'—
24 The States
25 Converse
27 Rest periods
32 Give support to (with "up")
33 Fear
34 Rounded roof
35 "— Sawyer"
36 Discussion group
38 Insect egg
39 War god
41 Math brch.
42 Seethes
44 Sterile (Hyph.)
46 — homo!
47 "Over and —"
48 Unruly child
50 Prolonged, as an illness
54 Madman
58 Cafe au —
59 Pinkish color
61 Desert in Asia
62 Foot part
63 Summa cum —
64 Norse god
65 Tiny
66 "— Gantry"
67 Plane part

DOWN
1 Singer — Domino
2 Land measure
3 Ratite bird
4 Spectacles
5 Harder to find
6 Undermine
7 Journey portion
8 Frosts
9 Merry-go-round
10 Play
11 — mater
12 Fermented honey drink
15 Settled a debt
20 Diminutive suffix
22 Snake
25 Task
26 Old Greek poet
27 Line of peaks
28 Sheep
29 Bar mixer
30 Rousseau title
31 Hardens
32 For men only
36 Little piece
37 Cakes and —
40 Sleek
42 Noggin
43 Stop sign shape
45 Enjoyment
48 Bit of grass
49 Monarch
50 Talon
51 Fabled racer
52 Paddy plant
53 Fossil fuel
55 Fuss (Hyph.)
56 Long-legged bird
57 Movie
60 Liquor

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

M	O	A	T			D	E	M	I		S	O	W	S
A	R	C	H		B	E	G	A	N		Q	U	I	P
P	E	E	R		A	L	O	N	G		U	R	S	A
	O	R	I	O	L	E			E	R	A	S	E	R
			V	I	E	D			N	O	W			
	F	E	E	L			S	P	E	C	K	L	E	D
G	L	A	D	Y	S		E	A	R			A	L	E
O	A	T			O	P	E	R	A			B	A	N
A	R	E			L	A	D			L	A	M	E	N	T
T	E	N	D	R	I	L	S			C	O	L	D	
			O	U	T			T	R	A	M			
P	L	A	S	M	A			R	O	D	E	N	T	
L	U	N	A		I	M	P	E	L		N	O	R	A
A	G	O	G		R	O	U	S	E		T	O	I	L
N	E	N	E		E	B	B	S			S	N	O	B

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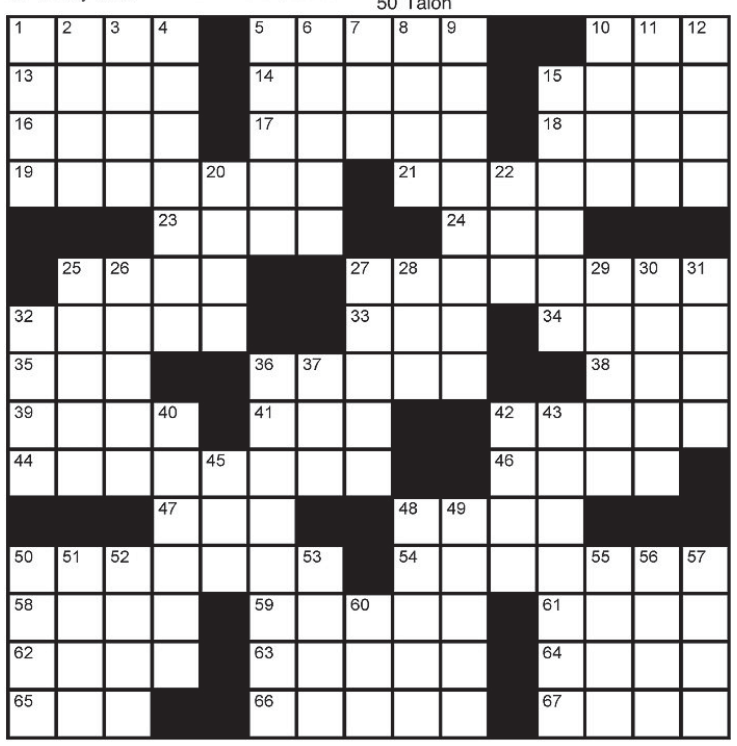

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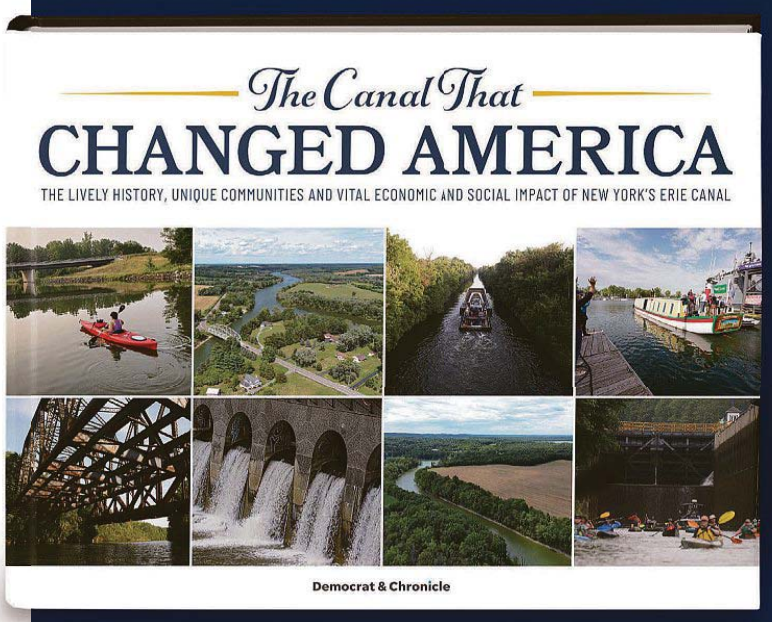
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Democrat & Chronicle

cover not final

They called it "Clinton's Folly." Two centuries later, it looks like genius.

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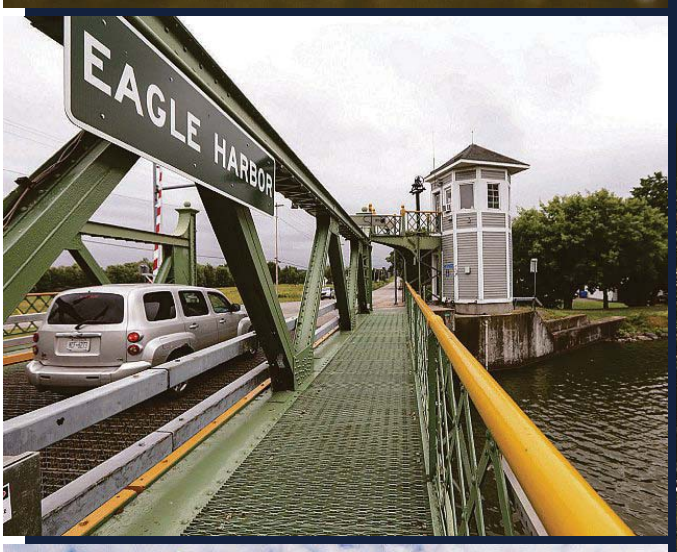

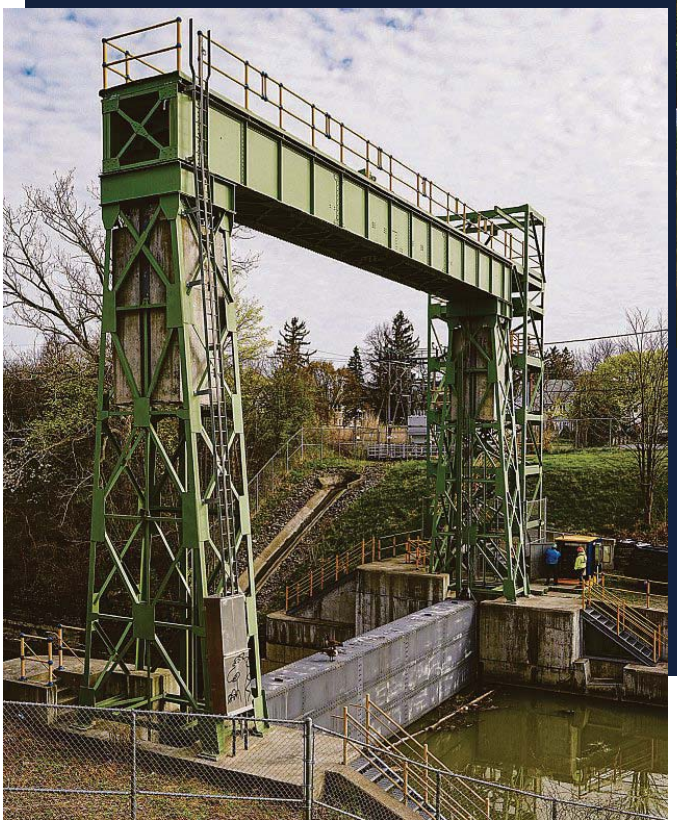

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